



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

HN 3LHV Q

THE STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

ANNA MONICA PIA
DUCHESS OF SAXONY



720310

Jesse McComb ⁹²⁰
Hartford Ct

THE STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD



Art. Repro. Co.

*The Countess Montignoso
and her daughter,
Princess Monica of Saxony*

The Struggle for a Royal Child

Anna Monica Pia, Duchess of Saxony

My Experiences as Governess in the House of
the COUNTESS MONTIGNOSO during 1906

BY
IDA KREMER



MITCHELL KENNERLEY
NEW YORK

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

to be made within the time of probation. If I succeed within those thirty days in proving myself worth my salt by my achievements in Florence—in other words, by bringing the little Princess to the Court in Dresden—who is to say that the head-governess there will rate my further services at the same high figure as the Chamberlain's Office does, *for the special job*? And if I don't succeed, will Othello's occupation be gone or not? Anyhow, it's an experiment.

Two years have gone by since the notorious Muth-affair, out of which the comic papers made such endless copy. The result of Fräulein Muth's inefficiency was, as all the world knows, that Anna Monica Pia, Duchess of Saxony, was left with her mother. The Countess Louise of Montignoso, Princess of Tuscany (and as such, Her Imperial Highness), actually succeeded in being allowed to keep her "Monili" two years longer than had been arranged.

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

But now a fresh crisis is approaching—one of the conditions on which the Countess was to be allowed to see her two elder sons in Munich being, that on December 1, 1906, the Princess Pia Monica should be finally handed over to the Royal Court in Dresden for her future education.

But the Countess Montignoso knew how to make *her* conditions, too, and so she demanded that the future governess (who was to be selected by the King) should, immediately before the handing over of the Princess, undertake her education in Florence for one month in order that the Countess might have some personal knowledge of her child's teacher; and also in order that the Princess might grow accustomed to this new instructress, so that the transfer from the mother's hands to strange ones (for, after all, the Royal father *is* a total stranger to the poor little Princess) might not be quite so distressing to her. The demand seems perfectly reasonable,

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

perfectly sensible, yet maternal cunning has a great deal to say in it! At any rate, the Court agreed, and thereby put into the Countess's hands a fresh weapon wherewith to lengthen out the struggle for the Royal child. And now Destiny has summoned me to assist in this new phase of the conflict. In the circumstances, it would be somewhat questionably to my advantage that it should be the last! I shall have, indeed, to fight through this phase almost as a duellist. However, one resolution I shall make, if I decide to go: my weapons shall be love, my shield the conscientious fulfilment of my duty; and those are the best arms against malice, cunning, and intrigue, for all of which I must be prepared.

Despite these fine resolutions, the task—regarded from a purely “human” point of view—appears to me a desperately difficult one. I am a woman, too, and a mother into the bargain, and I feel and think like

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

a woman and a mother. I can understand how terribly grievous it must be to a mother, not only to endure the separation from all her children, but now to have to let her nestling go. The worst of sinners remains no less the mother of her children. That is why I shall need some such firm moral support as a deep sense of duty, if I am to prevail against the mere human temptations which assuredly await me. It's not a pretty task—to go forth to take a mother's baby from her! But I must school myself to realize that *so it must be*—must be, perchance, for the child's own sake—and that I shall be nothing more than the tool of that necessity. If it were not I, it would be someone else—possibly a second Muth woman, who knows not forbearance. . . . Better it should be I than another like that. Perhaps I shall succeed—if I do succeed in the business—in persuading the mother herself that it is best for her dear little one to enter the sphere to which she is born

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

before she grows any older; perhaps I shall succeed in consoling that mother for her loss by teaching her the joy of abnegation for her daughter's good. When it is not necessary to wound or to hurt, it should never be done. But my best asset is to be my love for the child, whom from henceforth I think I have a right to shelter with all the sympathy I feel. The child is the treasure for whom all I do shall be done.

Most assuredly it is not the fifty marks a month which attracts me, nor the hope of a position at Court—much coveted, despite its many drawbacks. Rather it is the hope of being able to accomplish a labour of love, to rescue a little, tender soul from a set of conditions which will but become more intolerable with time, and to surround it then with all the innocent joys of a happy childhood. But I mustn't make myself out better than I am. My sentiments are all right, but they don't overflow; some-

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

times, indeed, they seem to me rather far-fetched, although I am quite sincere about them. The little weight that turns the scale is doubtless something quite different! I shall come to know, in her intimate, everyday life, the much-loved, much-abused Louise of the Saxon Court! I shall have an opportunity of finding out for myself how it is possible that thousands of Saxon hearts should still cherish an extravagant devotion for this woman—veritable problem as it is of the psychology of a people, of the hysteria of the mob. I shall get to know something of a character which is a problem, too—assuredly not to be judged by any moral pattern: neither that of Court etiquette, nor that of the self-respecting lady, nor yet that of the hypnotized so-called “sympathetic” people. Thus there is simply no actual question of “judging” at all, but only of trying to understand—in the beginning, at any rate. *Tout comprendre, c’est tout*—— Well, whether even

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

so, one will be able to excuse *everything*, I don't yet know!

Latest Intelligence.—The Countess, during the Munich meeting, declared herself satisfied with the testimonials which were then laid before her, and is ready to engage me, and I—sign my contract!

.

October 30.

Here are my instructions: I am to start at once for Florence, there to acquaint myself with all details of the system adopted for Princess Monica Pia up to the present, and I am to try as well as I can to make the child accustomed to me. The Countess has promised to decide finally in the course of a month whether she will entrust her permanently to me. It follows naturally, then, that I must try to gain the confidence of the Countess Montignoso—the most difficult task of all. When the

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

time of probation is over and the Princess has been given up, I am to betake myself with her wherever His Majesty the King Friedrich August of Saxony may command—temporarily to the Castle of Bartenstein, near Crailsheim, to the Countess's brother-in-law, the Prince of Hohenlohe, then to another princely house, and finally to Dresden, when Pia Monica will be educated together with her brothers and sisters. On November 1, I enter upon my duties in Florence. My arrival will be announced to the Countess by wire. My train starts from the Dresden terminus to-day at eleven o'clock; I have a through ticket to Florence in my purse. When I was getting it yesterday the official said straight out that he supposed I was the new governess for "Monica." The *Dresdener Rundschau* had not failed to announce the fact of my engagement to its readers! The official abounded in exaggerated affirmations of the innocence of the poor victimized Coun-

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

tess, and entrusted me with "a million greetings for Louise from the whole land of Saxony," besides the few millions of letters and post-cards I already had from "Louisa-maniacs." I was already sitting in the train before it occurred to me that at the Chancery Office they had never given me the latest address of the Countess in Florence. I found out afterwards that they didn't know it themselves, but were still using the old address—"Via Benedetto da Faiano"—although since the beginning of October the Countess has been living on Bellosguardo, in the hill-side villa of Montauto. Evidently the system of espionage with which the Dresden Court is supposed to surround the poor Countess isn't very efficient.

.

October 31.

A day on the road, and that is not exactly pure joy for anyone who is not accus-

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

tomed to travelling! I intend to do the thirty-hour journey without stopping. My arrival was announced to the Countess for 4.48 in the afternoon of October 31. How will she receive me? Will she see in me only the emissary of her detested Dresden Court, and let me feel it? What will the first meeting be like? I've had lots of time to picture it all to myself.

I shall arrive. Nobody at the station. So I shall have to go to the German Consulate to ask for the address; so I shall be late. Uppish servants will show me my room. Then I shall be left alone there, to accustom myself to my new surroundings. They will send my meal up to my room (perhaps they will isolate me there as much as possible). Perhaps they will then show me, as a matter of form, how Pia Monica is washed and dressed. Perhaps they will ask me if I can do it properly, and giggle and laugh at me if I make a mistake. . . . But, above all, the first meeting with the

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

Countess! A lackey will appear, announcing that Frau Gräfin requests that I should be conducted to her room. She will receive me coolly, perhaps with some of her renowned realistic expressions. They shall not break down my dignity, as I shall prove by a faultless Court curtsy, showing that I set a value upon forms; and then I shall make a speech, beginning with "Most gracious Countess," in which I shall say how extraordinarily difficult my task appears to me; and how hard it must be for the Countess to feel any confidence in me, however good my intentions are; and how resolute I am in my peculiar position, of whose difficulty I am fully conscious, to carry out my duties on one side towards the Court, and on the other to attend to all the most natural demands of the Countess; and so on. . . .

The enthusiasm with which I rehearse my speech gives me a palpitation of the heart, and just before reaching Munich I

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

hastily practise my Court curtsy in the empty ladies' carriage, whose narrow proportions are somewhat injurious to its perfect execution. Yes, even at night, when the train is slowly creeping up the Brenner behind Innsbruck, my nervousness pursues me, and though I am half asleep, I still keep on polishing-up my speech, until just as we pass the French frontier two ladies get into my carriage, who cannot sleep any more than I can, and with whom I soon find myself carrying on a conversation in French. At Ala I leave the Dresden train for the first time; with a dreary sort of sensation, I get into an Italian second-class carriage. I am agreeably disappointed; it is quite tolerably clean. Verona! The train is travelling through the Lombardy Plains. There are broad orchards, where the vines climb from tree to tree, the green leaves of which are already noticeably tinted with the red and gold of autumn. Modena! The old University town of

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

Bologna! The Apennines! Tunnel after tunnel! Splendid picturesque valleys flash by, to be instantly swallowed up by the next tunnel. The landscape grows gradually wooded; and now the clear sun breaks through the grey vault of clouds. I am getting infected by the Italian restlessness. I have a crick in my neck. I keep jumping up and counting my parcels, then sitting down again, and jumping up again, to take the parcels on my lap. . . . And out of sheer nervousness I murmur once more: "Most gracious Countess" . . . *my speech* . . . and then stretch up again for my parcels. . . . A stop. "Firenze!"

CHAPTER II

IN the midst of the deafening noise at the Florence terminus, in the midst of the pushing and crushing and hurrying to and fro, people must have clearly seen that I was a poor stranded German lady, if only by my way of looking about me—for I am very short-sighted. Therefore, I was not much surprised—although very agreeably so—to hear myself called to loudly as “Frau Kramer.” My name happens to be Kramer, but that’s a detail. I went up to the lady who called me—a slender person, with round, rosy cheeks. It happened that on my journey I had read a newspaper report of the meeting at Munich, and it said there that the Countess had been accompanied by a nursery-governess named Haubold. Aha! then this was evidently Fräulein Haubold, the only person in the entourage

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

of the Countess Montignoso of whom I knew anything whatever, and all I knew of *her* was that she was probably here now! So I said: "Fräulein Haubold?"

"Oh! *na-in*," was the answer in Swiss-German; "she *iss* with the Princess. I am the lady's maid of Her Impeerial Highness."

Oh! then she calls herself "Imperial Highness"! Nothing here of her brother Wölfling's fancy for the dropping of titles; she doesn't even seem satisfied with Countess: she likes better to be Princess of Tuscany—Her Imperial Highness!

"Laa-ge-ler!" cried the lady's maid (as in Austria and Switzerland waiting-women are called, though they are mostly ladies). "You don't mind Lagler coming with us in the carriage? He is Her Imperial Highness's chauffeur, and is coming from the hospital in Bologna."

Lagler is Swiss, too—a long, meagre, haggard, sickly-looking creature, who holds himself very badly. The Countess Mon-

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

tignoso wished originally to go in her automobile to Munich for the meeting with her sons, but she only got as far as Bologna. There something happened to the automobile, and at the same time the chauffeur got eczema, so that both had to be taken to their respective infirmaries, and the Countess had to go on by train with the little Princess and the nursery governess.

I allowed myself and my belongings to be taken whither my guide directed. In the end, we all found ourselves together in the *fiacre*, after having run the gauntlet of the long line of hotel-omnibuses and other vehicles, not a single driver of which omitted to invite us, with waving hat, seductive smile, and gleaming eye, to be seated therein. But Tonnino was waiting for us—Tonnino, one of the two “Cabbies of the Body-Guard,” so to speak, of the Countess. His stand is at the Porta Romana. He had opened his vast umbrella, which is fastened to the driving-seat, and shelters

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

him from sun and rain alike—for the blue sky had disappeared again, and rain was threatening.

Soon began the ascent to Bellosguardo, the highest-lying part of Florence; the highest-lying villa in which, belonging to the Countess Montauto, now houses the Countess Montignoso. It was almost dark when good Tonnino, who ever since the ascent began had been going through desperate exertions, pulled up at the gate of the villa, the high tower of which is the only part visible from the outside. The gate was opened; the carriage rolled in between tall bushes, and stopped before the open hall-door.

I entered. The hall was only dimly lit by a shaded lamp. All I could see in a hasty survey was that a crimson-carpeted staircase on the right leads to the upper storeys. There wasn't a servant to be seen. I stepped back irresolutely to look after my luggage. . . . Just then a slender, white-robed apparition came down the

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

stairs, leading a little girl by the hand. I felt quite sure of myself this time—it must be Fräulein Haubold and the little Princess! I went up to them and said, very politely: “Fräulein Haubold?”

“Oh, please — no!” the apparition laughed. “I’m Her Imperial Highness herself! How are you? Did you have a comfortable journey, Frau Kramer? And see: I’ve brought Monili too! Go, Monili; give Frau Kramer your handie, and be sweet and good!”

I was thunderstruck. For this I was *not* prepared! I tried to excuse myself. A gay laugh disposed of all that, and then I bent down to Little Goldilocks. The small, dainty thing snuggled up to her mother as if frightened, and looked at me nervously out of the corners of her eyes. Of course, for the poor child I was something like the dustman who throws dust in the children’s eyes, and takes them away in his bag!

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

“Wait a little,” I thought; “we’ll soon be good friends.”

The Countess rumbled the little Princess’s curly hair, and then caught hold of my cloak as if to help me to take it off. I tried to make a protest. . . . What about that Court curtsy? There wasn’t much chance for it!

In the meantime the real Fräulein Haubold appeared--a Saxon girl from Bautzen. She greeted me with a curt nod, caught the little Princess by the hand, and said shrilly, and somewhat sharply: “Come with me.”

The little thing eagerly followed the girl, the most striking feature of whose face was two deep lines, which went from the nostrils, past the corners of the mouth, almost down to the end of the chin.

In the meantime the Countess, with her indescribable charm, was rendering the difficult situation quite easy for me, and I was intensely grateful to her for making a joke out of our accidental meeting. She

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

apologized for not being able to offer me a warm bath, but there was very little water up here, she said. The house, indeed, lacked many of the comforts which we prize so much at home. It was a thoroughly bad specimen of an Italian villa, but I must try to make myself as comfortable as the circumstances permitted. Her things would shortly be coming from Salzburg, and then we should be much more homelike. . . . But now she would show me my room, and then send me down some hot water and a cup of tea, and I was to take a good rest, and at half-past seven dinner would be ready. With "Adieu, Frau Kramer, and have a nice rest"—lo! she was gone.

Truly, there is not much opportunity for curtseys with her! If I had come hither in a defiant and spiteful spirit, as the trusted emissary of the Royal Court, this kindness would have disarmed me from the first moment. I well understand now how such a woman can entrap you into loving her,

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

and therefore I must be doubly on my guard, so that she may not make me unfaithful to my trust, and win me over to her side. That would be a new way for her to snap her fingers in the face of the Court!

Towards eight o'clock appeared the pretty housemaid, Gioconda, dressed in white from head to foot, and requested me to come up to dinner. It was served to me alone in the huge dining-room, which hasn't a single curtain or hanging in it, and looks terribly bare.

During the meal I heard continually childish movements in the next room. When I had almost finished, there came the rustling of the Countess's silk linings behind me. I sprang up, and begged permission to see my future charge in bed. The Countess led me to her little white cot. She stood at one side, and I went to the other. Monili was not yet asleep. She was much more friendly than before, and gave me her

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

little hand, gazing from me to her mother with her wonderful dark hazel eyes. We talked for a long time across the child's cot, until at last it was time for Monili to go to sleep. First, she had to say a short prayer: "Ich bin klein; mein Herzl ist rein. Soll niemand drin wohnen, als Jesukindl allein!" ("I am little; my heart is pure. No one shall dwell in it but the dear child Jesus. Dear God, keep dear papa, dear mamma, brothers and sisters, and me. Dear, sweet Guardian Angel, guard me!")

What a strange situation! I could hardly restrain my tears. I was here to take this guileless baby from her mother. Should I succeed in winning the little heart, and being a new friend to it in the new life? . . . The mother will oppose me there, and fight me in the sweetest and most innocent way in the world! Is not the task entirely beyond me? Are they genuine—the mother's sweetness and gaiety? Isn't she thinking quite differently in her heart all the time?

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

Can I possibly seem to her anything except the evil spirit which is to come between herself and her child? Oh, it's hideous to think of! But perhaps it's only that the Countess is sure of victory, and thinks she will be able to dispose of me as easily as of the others, so that her sweetness and gaiety are probably quite genuine. She is simply playing with me, as a cat does with a mouse; and *that's* not a very pleasant thought, either! "You can fret me, but you shall not play upon me," as Hamlet says. Now Hamlet was, as all the world knows, no diplomatist; otherwise he would not have been "fretted," or at least he wouldn't have said so. . . . With the comforting thought in my heart that I should manage better than Hamlet, I obeyed the instructions of Her Imperial Highness (for, of course, in her own house she must henceforth be that to me), who closed the first evening's conversation with the words: "Well, Frau Kramer—Frau Krømer—

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

you'll be able to have a decent sleep at last."

.

November 1.

It was half-past eight before I was awakened by Fräulein Haubold.

"Her Imperial Highness wishes to know if you have had a good night's rest? Didn't you hear the carriage this morning? She is gone to early Mass. Ah!" added Fräulein, with a pious, upward glance, "she goes to Mass every morning!"

I should never have suspected the Princess of being so religious. But now I remember—of course, to-day is All Saints'. So I felt obliged to answer: "Well, I hope the good God won't be angry with me if I don't go to Mass to-day. I'm not quite rested yet."

Haubold looked at me distrustfully and disappeared. I went up to breakfast, and found my little charge there. She is truly a lovely creature, this sweet wee Anna

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

Monica Pia of mine. She seems to me even prettier than the innumerable photographs of her, which for the most part are somewhat affected-looking, artificial in pose and expression. The great beauty of the little face is the eyes. They are of the most wonderful size and depth of dark colour, their shape is exquisite, and they are expressive beyond anything that I could have dreamed of in so young a child. They are like Mignon's eyes—those mysterious star-like orbs, with their deep dark iris, and the gleams of greenish light. Her curly hair is bright gold. Her skin is flower-like. The little body is elf-like in its dainty grace; yet already, for all its *sans gêne* and its lightness, there is a certain air of pride about the child, as if she knew how important she is and how much depends upon her. It doesn't take one long to recognize the Royalty in her! Possibly, also, the slightly obstinate and defiant look about the rosy baby mouth enhances this impression. The

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

colouring is of Southern warmth. Even her body is quite dark—not at all the clear pink-and-white of German children. . . .

Little Monica and I will soon be great friends. She showed me her doll's carriage and her dolls—simple, almost common celluloid ones (presents from the Grand-Ducal grandmamma)—her picture-books, her bricks, and all her toys.

Monica speaks good German, but with a slight Austrian accent, like her mother. She has learnt Italian, too, almost entirely from the servants, but very well; and she mixes up her German with scraps of Italian in the funniest, most engaging way.

At lunch-time the Princess came in from Mass and visiting, and sat down to the meal at once. She lunches with Monica, who knows how to manage her knife and fork quite prettily, assisted by Haubold, who stands behind her little chair, cuts up her meat, fastens her napkin, and so on. Afterwards I am served, and then the rest dine

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

in the servants' hall on the ground-floor. Besides Gioconda, Villa Montauto shelters two other women-servants: Severina, the "tweeny," a daughter of the country, like Gioconda, but certainly a somewhat coarser specimen; she is especially for the rough work, and seems fitted for it by her hoarse, croaking voice, which, after all, is not very surprising in such a tall robust person. The principal personage is undoubtedly Frau Rosina, a very pretty young widow. The Princess declares that her face is the pure Roman type; but Rosina comes from Lombardy. She is the cook, and rules her kingdom, as far as I can see, most excellently, with, as the Countess amusingly relates, a full sense of her responsible position. At eight o'clock in the morning she appears in the kitchen and drinks her coffee, which Gioconda must have quite ready for her; then she makes her toilet and goes off, spick-and-span, to town to make her purchases. Towards eleven o'clock she comes back.

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

A boy, whom she engages on the way, always carries her parcels to the kitchen. For no consideration whatever would she dream of carrying even the smallest parcel herself. Then Rosina cooks, and after her meal rests for an hour, then spends the rest of the afternoon out-of-doors, while the maids wash her dishes and peel the potatoes. Towards six o'clock she appears again, cooks the dinner, sweeps in to the Countess between eight and nine, gives in the accounts, and lays the *menu* for the next day before her. And so ends her day's work.

The hours between two and five are, at Villa Montauto, usually consecrated to repose. At two o'clock little Monica is put to bed, her room is darkened, and, to make her go to sleep quicker, Fräulein Haubold (or "Hede," as the child calls her) must lie down on her bed and go to sleep too! At five o'clock Monica is awakened, and then she and I have tea together—at least,

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

she drinks three cups of milk with a little tea added. She loves to have a “tiny wee lump of sugar” in it, too. By the time we have finished our meal it is dark, and we go into the nursery to play. . . . Monica was quite friendly, once the ice was broken—she soon began to tease me:

“Do you know, Frau Kremer, who you are? You are—Moni’s governess!” and then she made a face, as if she had said something naughty, such as the “Black Man,” or the *very* reprehensible “God bless us!” But to show me that she didn’t believe too much in the “governess” part of it, she ran up to me with outstretched arms and gave me a hearty kiss, upon which I swung her round and round, until her little legs were flying.

CHAPTER III

November 2.

ALL SOULS' DAY! I was up early enough to-day, but I couldn't make up my mind to go to Mass; it seems to me much more important to make myself thoroughly acquainted with my new duties. As I want to learn all about the personal care of the little Princess, I presented myself in her bedroom at half-past seven, when she has her bath. The business of the morning bath is a very troublesome one, on account of the extremely primitive water arrangements; the housemaid, Severina, has to get up shortly before four to light the fire in the bath-stove, for it takes quite four hours to heat the water in the boiler to the requisite temperature. It seems that Monica has a veritable passion for taking baths and wash-

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

ing herself generally. They tell me that she knows no greater joy than splashing about in lots of water. She doesn't care whether it's hot or cold; so long as it's water she's satisfied. Her bath is a most meticulous affair. Her whole body is not only sponged and rubbed, but actually *brushed* ! Then comes the cold douche—first on the face, then over the whole body; and it astonishes one freshly every time to see the evident delight with which the little creature lets the cold stream flow all over her, even though her arms get quite blue with the chill. When the bath is over, the teeth are carefully brushed, and the rebellious curls are combed and smoothed. Then we go to the dining-room for morning-coffee. Every morning there is good, strong coffee, buttered toast, and honey, and milk for the child.

.
As I was going to Monica this morning the Princess met me, already dressed for

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

driving. Haubold was once more inspired to ejaculate in her broad Saxon: "She's off to early Mass again!"

I answered that I had made up my mind not to go this morning either.

"Then *you're* not so religious as all that?" was the comment.

"If I go to Mass on Sundays I think it's enough," replied I. "But I am surprised to find the Princess so devout."

"She isn't a bit devout, really. She's not going to Mass at all! First she goes to the fencing saloon, and then to the Baths, every morning!"

.

The Princess came in to lunch again just the same as yesterday. She was quite as studiously sweet to me as before, and gave me a splendid opportunity of studying her. I had heard so many contradictory things about the lady, and seen so many pictures of her, that I was most deeply interested in this chance of making acquaintance with

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

her so closely and intimately. Naturally I haven't got very far as yet. I had been astonished already in her mere outward appearance, especially on that first evening, for she seemed to me so much younger and slenderer-looking than I could have guessed from the photographs. Although she barely reaches middle height, and shares with Odysseus the peculiarity of looking tall when she's sitting, and short when she's standing, these defects are largely redeemed by her fine figure and graceful bearing. Her walk spoils the effect a little, though. It is not quite gainly; but her other movements are quick and energetic, not to say jerky. Her complexion is fresh, but marred by a troublesome flush, which is particularly noticeable across the nose and the upper part of the cheeks.

Like Monica, the Princess has a veritable mania for water—cold or hot. No day goes by without the morning-bath, and many another “all-over” wash besides.

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

Of course her complexion suffers. Her features are haughty, even noble. Energy and strong will are stamped upon her face, despite its kindliness. But one longs to be able to hide the mouth; it again spoils the effect. How shall I describe it? "Temperamental" is hardly strong enough! And yet it indicates my meaning. That mouth is characteristic of the woman—it betrays a lot! Her teeth are dazzlingly white, and she is fond of displaying them. I have rarely seen such perfect teeth—like delicate, bluish-white porcelain. Her eyes are blue—a little veiled—as though, while she says one thing, she is already pondering the next. Her hair is brown, and fashionably, but not exaggeratedly, dressed. She declares it is naturally wavy, even curly; but Nature is apparently a little neglectful sometimes, and has to be recalled to a sense of duty by the hairdresser's tongs. My impression of her that first evening, when she came downstairs in her high-cut, white silk blouse, and

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

black-and-white checked skirt, was, after all, a lamp-light one! The cold light of day takes much from the effect, especially as regards the face, which has too much colour. The lines under the eyes show too, the features look less refined, and the lower part of the chin is over-developed. This is particularly noticeable when the Princess appears in a low dress. Her preference for very *décolleté* dresses extends even to her tea-gowns, for which she chooses, almost exclusively, white materials—cloth or silk. They are made either kimono-fashion, or in a sort of compromise between the Classic style and the Empire. Though she has a well-developed, even a superb, bust, she does not look well in this undraped condition—in fact, it does not suit her, mainly because the texture and colour of her neck have been injured by her continual scrubbings. It looks quite rough and red sometimes; and, in any case, her skin is naturally too dark for her style of dress.

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

She has an extraordinary fancy for white. Whenever it's possible to do so, she wears white dresses, white blouses, white gloves (never any kind but *glacé* kid), and white jewels. Pearls and diamonds in silver settings are plainly her favourites. She seldom, if ever, wears rings, except the plain wedding-ring. As a Catholic, she cannot really be divorced, and indeed, she regards herself *now* much more as the consort of His Majesty the King of Saxony than she did in former days—and rarely speaks of him except as “my husband.” The wedding-ring is the only gold she ever wears, as a rule. In her ears she usually has beautiful pearls, but seldom the wonderful diamond-buttons which she is known to possess. Monica shares her fancy for white, and if one tells her to pick some flowers, one may be perfectly certain that she will choose white roses instead of red ones, white pinks, white asters, and so on. And she decidedly likes her white frocks

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

better than her dark ones, just as her mother does.

The Princess lays great stress upon the care of the hands and feet, although with all her striving she can't succeed in giving her hands the much-coveted classic grace. Perhaps this makes her feet seem all the prettier! The toes are as flexible as fingers, and the nails are exquisitely kept. She showed me proudly, when we were talking of her *régime*, the beautiful naked foot, and moved the toes about, maintaining that she could easily have learnt to play the piano with them.

In her manner, the Princess has all the incomparable charm of the Austrian woman, which contributes not a little to the general attraction of her personality. There is about her such a spontaneous, natural kindness and grace that nobody can resist her for long. To this is added the charm of the pretty Austrian accent, which is noticeable in the Princess, although her

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

voice is not particularly musical; on the contrary, when I came here, it seemed very thick, almost hoarse. This hoarseness spoils her singing, and I have already advised her to consult a specialist about it, which she has promised to do.

One very quickly notices how accomplished she is: she writes poetry and composes. She has already written about sixty songs; she is particularly fond of the poems of Heinz Evers, and has set to music some of the most lyrical ones. She has promised to give me her poems to read, and to play her compositions to me. Some time ago, she studied modelling with a lady-sculptor, and after a few lessons was easily able to copy from the antique; but the lessons have now been given up. It seems she is entirely lacking in the necessary application to do anything serious in the artistic line. She begins all sorts of things, and finishes nothing. Her whole atmosphere breathes of unrest, and gives the impression

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

that she is incapable of concentration. Except two daily newspapers, the *Tag* and the *Leipziger Neuesten Nachrichten*, she reads little or nothing, and even those she runs through very hastily. The only thing she is really interested in is the Court news.

In the early days of my stay, the papers were always bringing out more or less detailed descriptions of her meeting in Munich with her two eldest sons. All these accounts were read by the Princess with the deepest interest, and supplemented by contributions from numerous "Louisa-maniacs." Each one, as it came, was cut out, and pasted into a book. She has volumes full of cuttings already. Even all the jokes about her, the very worst and most disreputable (including those at the time of her relations with Giron), are carefully pasted in, and this, so far as I can see, is the only occupation to which she keeps steadily. She showed me cuttings from the *Jugend*, from

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

the *Simplizissimus*, from the *Lustige Blätter*, and the other comic papers.

This collection appears to afford her great pleasure. She is very proud of her “archives,” and told me radiantly that she was doing it all as a legacy for her children—a most singular idea! She doesn’t seem to feel the slightest vexation, or to have any sort of sense of the impropriety and degradation of such notices. Indeed, she is so extraordinary that she only seems annoyed when the reports say anything that isn’t true. It doesn’t matter how dreadful the things are—that doesn’t trouble her—only they must be *facts* ; that she insists upon. And an impudent, even a risky joke about her, doesn’t seem to disturb her in the least. Indeed, it rather seems to me as if that is what amuses her most.

This very day some more accounts about the Munich meeting came in.

“Do, *do* look what the newspapers have stuck in to-day—here, in one of the Munich

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

ones—a sickening bit of sentimentality! You *must* hear it: ‘Then the Princess’—that’s me—‘kissed passionately the hand of her mother’—my mother!—‘Tears were rolling down the Grand Duchess’s face’—oh, of course, we all wept, swam in tears, tears were streaming down everybody’s cheeks! I got it from friends this morning. They tell me that it was read out at a party, and that tears were running down everybody’s cheeks there too. Such silly nonsense!”

She made truly royal fun of the newspaper account, and of the kind friends, and ended with her usual expression on such occasions, “It makes me as sick as a dog.”

For the rest, the Princess always speaks with the most affectionate emotion of her children. Now, after she has just seen the two eldest, the longing for the other three is more violent than ever, and she is never tired of telling me about her darlings.

“And I’m supposed to be going to give up

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

the only one I have left—my little Monica! It's not to be thought of. Surely you, as a mother, must see that? My darling, my youngest, loveliest child, my sweet Monica must stay with me. That's as sure as Fate. If she doesn't, I shall simply go mad."

But shortly afterwards the fear of going mad seemed to have died out, for she declared:

"Before I give up Monica I must see the three others again."

And when I cautiously ventured the question whether she really thought it would be better for Monica to stay with her, she sat up with a jerk, and exclaimed:

"No! She would relinquish Monica unconditionally—she was determined upon that, for she would never be able to give her the position which awaited her at the Court in Dresden."

CHAPTER IV

I AM gradually getting to feel at home, and as if I were a part of the household machine—a machine, to tell the truth, which is somewhat ill-regulated, for if Haubold of the shrill voice had not constituted herself more or less “boss” of the place, the Italian servants would be even less regular and orderly than they are as it is.

The Princess drives early every morning to the fencing-saloon, where she is taking lessons in “the art of the rapier” under the best fencing-master in Florence, Signor Giollini. After her lesson she has a bath at the “Roman Baths” and then pays visits, which last until lunch-time. Thus, there is plenty of opportunity, during the early part of the day, to take one’s bearings in and about the villa. The Villa Montauto, which stands higher than almost any other

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

of the many such buildings on Bellosguardo, belongs, as I have already said, to the Counts of Montauto, from whom the Princess rents it furnished. Through an iron gate you come into a garden; then by broad gravel paths, bordered with laurels, you reach an open square, surrounded by trees and shrubbery, and closed on the right-hand side by the house. This is a sprawling, two-storied erection, which, with its barred windows and bleak, bare façade, makes a very uninteresting sort of impression. The high tower, which overtops the house, is visible only from the street, whence the villa looks dignified and stately enough. By a plain, brown-painted door, you reach a hall, with a fireplace, on the right of which a handsome staircase leads to the upper storey. Crimson stair-carpets with brass rods give it a homelike, cosy look, intensified by a group of palms and leafy plants on the landing. The upstairs corridor is narrow and scantily furnished. One of the

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

pieces is a black marble table, with beautiful coloured mosaic-work. Everywhere stand vases with growing flowers. On the right of the hall, a door leads to the kitchen and basements; and close by is another door, with a crimson portière, by which the enormous dining-room is reached. It's a bleak sort of room, with two windows, and its bareness is appalling—it hasn't a single curtain or hanging of any kind. But the view from its windows makes up for its own lack of beauty. A real paradise seems spread before one's enraptured eyes. White villas nestle among green gardens, dominated by a few tall cypresses. Olive-orchards, fields, and fruit-trees climb right up the hill-side, and in the background a chain of lofty mountains bounds the horizon, with the deep blue sky above all—a heavenly picture.

Unwillingly one turns from it to the arid desolation of the room. The whitewashed walls have as sole decoration about four

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

family portraits of the Counts of Montauto—if, indeed, such wretched old engravings deserve the name of decoration. Sofas stand against two of the walls; there are various tables and low *consoles* with marble tops, on which the Princess's beautiful silver, with her monogram and the crown, makes a brave show. A dozen upholstered chairs, Empire style, like the sofas, are the only other furniture besides the marble stove and the big dinner-table. The table is luxuriously and tastefully laid; a silver flower basket, which is always filled with flowers or greenery, decorates the centre of it. From the dining-room a door on the left leads into the servants' hall, a singularly uncomfortable and unpleasant apartment. The same door leads into the other rooms as well. Exactly opposite the foot of the staircase is the little Princess Monica's room, which the nursery-maid shares with her. It is large and bright, with two balconied windows looking on the front. This room

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

is the nicest and sunniest in the house. In the centre stands a table, surrounded by chairs and stools. One side of the room displays the wardrobe and dainty little washstand; on the other side stand the two beds. At the farther end are the stove, the maid's washstand, and the chest of drawers, while between the big windows stands a sofa covered with the same cretonne as the chairs and stools, and a simple toilet-table. When I have mentioned Monica's little play-table and bench, and a couple of small chairs in the corner where her toys are kept, I have said all. A double door leads from here to the Princess's apartments. I must confess that I entered them with much curiosity. Disappointment was inevitable! What? In these unostentatious, even ugly, rooms (all with cold stone floors), lives a Princess of the Imperial house, whose rooms in Dresden were known to have been fairy-talelike in their luxury. It is simply incredible!

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

The first, a large room opening on the balcony, is her bed and dressing room. The centre of it is occupied by a very large old-fashioned bed, low, and with a sort of *estrade* running round three sides of it. It is in carved ebony, and covered with a heavy crimson silk quilt. On the *table de nuit* lies the prayer-book, bound in black leather with a gold cross on it. On the wall near the bed hangs a very good pastel-portrait of Monica. A handsome marble mantel-piece, with a mirror above it, and some chairs covered in faded, worn red silk, are the only other things of importance in the room. In the window stands the toilet-table, strewn with costly silver and crystal, and boasting a tall revolving looking-glass.

Adjoining the bedroom is a little corner drawing-room, where the only furniture is an ordinary writing-table, a little sofa, some small corner cupboards, and chairs. A few water-colours deck the walls. Here, as everywhere, flowers abound, in slender, and

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

sometimes costly, glass vases. After this room comes the lady's maid's, and next to that the bathroom, which has been built out at the back.

The lower storey contains several sitting-rooms of varying size, but these are furnished only with the barest necessities, chairs being the principal installation. Some of the rooms have frescoes, valuable inlaid tables, faded silk hangings, and divans along the walls. On the whole, the impression is of departed glory, which doubtless would have cost a great deal to retain.

On the other side of the hall are three rooms communicating with each other. The first serves as a dining-room for the lady's maid, the nursery-maid, and the chauffeur. To this is attached a little bedroom, and to that, again, the largest of the three, which has been assigned to me. It is a bleak, bare place, with tapestry hangings and a stone floor, but it has a beautifully painted ceiling! Most of the space is taken

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

up by a vast four-poster, which is richly decorated with white net curtains, overhung by heavy olive-green ones. A primitive washstand, a *table de nuit*, a chest of drawers with a white marble top, half a dozen chairs, a comfortable cretonne-covered arm-chair, comprise, with the indispensable stove and toilet-table, the entire furniture—not a picture, not a carpet, not the faintest attempt at decoration of any kind. I begged for somewhere to hang up my dresses, and was given a sort of iron stand, like what one sees in a hall. The room is ineffably dreary—vault-like almost in its bareness, with its one barred window. And then it lies so desperately low! It has two doors of unseasoned wood, one of which shuts badly; and there are two more in the hangings, which lead to a large, empty room, and a lot of narrow, winding passages. Though I'm not naturally timid, it all feels very eerie, and especially when, as now, I sit alone late at night by my stove in my

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

arm-chair—the sole occupant of the ground-floor. I have put up the photographs of my distant near and dear ones, so as to make the place more homelike, and picked myself a bunch of roses, which grow in almost wild luxuriance all over the garden.

I mustn't leave the basement undescribed. It is lofty and spacious, and contains several good-sized rooms. Some serve as wood-stores, and for other lumber. One contains the Princess's many leather trunks; another is her hanging-cupboard, so to speak; and in this there are also a linen-press and ironing-board. A steep, narrow flight of stairs leads from this room to the bathroom, which is convenient for the Princess.

On the east of the house is the entrance to the chapel, which, however, is not used. It is tolerably large, with many rows of benches, a beautiful old altar, with the usual Florentine altar-piece—a Madonna and angels—and two confessionals.

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

Some hundred yards from the villa there stands, surrounded by trees, a very pretty pillared building, which now serves as a garage. Behind this is an old house, inhabited by a peasant and his family; for the extensive olive-orchards and vineyards which belong to the villa are worked for the profit of the Counts of Montauto. Round the corner from the garage one comes upon a most characteristic picture of rural Southern life: poultry, cattle, dark-haired peasant children, and men and women busied in the plucking or reaping of the olives. The women fetch water from the house in classically-shaped, copper-vessels—and these are the only living beings one sees about here. The garden is much neglected, but looks charming in its luxuriant verdure, particularly when one looks down on it from the first storey of the house. There are still some asters and chrysanthemums in the flower-beds, and white and crimson roses peep out from among the laurel-

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

bushes. The tower of the villa, with its two tall cypresses beside it, looks immensely picturesque from a distance. And yet it all makes a dreary sort of impression upon me, somehow. The house is certainly very far from comfortable inside. One can never get warm in it.

CHAPTER V

November 4.

THE Princess went off very early this morning to Bologna with the chauffeur to fetch the automobile, which was still under repair. The chauffeur is not quite well yet, either. The Princess, who has a passion for playing the Good Samaritan, bandages him herself every day. And so I have Moni all to myself for once. If only it was the case every day! How quickly she would have got accustomed to me, and how easily I could then have adopted a good system with her, which I clearly see already will be, as things are, inconceivably difficult!

The last few days I have started regularly at ten o'clock each morning for a walk with the little Princess. These promenades usually prolong themselves till twelve o'clock,

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

and then the noonday gun gives us the signal for turning back, so as to get home in good time for half-past one lunch. The weather has been wonderfully beautiful for these early November days. As the Princess says, we are enjoying the St. Martin's summer, which is so frequent in Italy. It is as summer-like here now as we have it in Germany in September. The sky is brilliantly blue, and at noon the sun is so hot that we have had to take to our light summer-clothes, straw-hats, and parasols again. The warmth outside makes the damp chilliness of the house all the more detestable. And it has brought in its train a disagreeable accompaniment—a plague of flies. The tiresome little mosquitoes, too, disturb our sleep with their venomous stings. Sometimes we have regular pitched battles with them, in which, despite the number of disabled on their side, we always seem to come off with the most wounds. Poor little Moni especially was simply covered with

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

blisters this morning. The Princess recommends us to try burning fumigating-tapers, called *zampironi* ; but whether they will be of the slightest good still remains to be seen. However, during the daytime we can enjoy undisturbed the beauties of Nature, and we are determined not to waste a moment of these last weeks of warmth. The last few days we have usually walked on Bellosguardo, where there are any amount of delightful narrow paths, with oaks and olive-trees peeping over the walls. Wonderful Florence lies spread out at our feet, clustered round the Duomo, which is the great architectural feature of the town proper. The lower town is, as it were, grouped around it, and its many *campanile*. The most remarkable features are, of course, those ancient glories of Florence—the Palazzi Pitti and Vecchio.

It is a wonderfully beautiful prospect that one beholds through the laurel and olive boughs. Evidently my Moni has

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

never been taught to notice the extraordinary beauty of the scene, for when, on one of the early days, I took her by the hand and pointed out to her the exquisite picture at our feet, she stood still and looked at it for a moment, and ever since, wherever there is an opening, she stands still and cries pleadingly, "Come, Frau Kremer: we must look at the lovely view again"—and smilingly I remember the old lesson-book of "Eyes and No Eyes."

Monica has scarcely any sense of colour, and possibly this explains her preference for the neutrality of white; but, at the same time, she is very much interested in the subject, for whenever she picks up a stone, a leaf, an acorn, or any other little thing, she always asks what colour it is.

"Do tell me, Frau Kremer, what colour the sky is."

"The sky is blue."

"And what color is the house?"

"The house is red."

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

"And now, *now*, Frau Kremer, what colour is the gate?"

"The gate is grey."

Then I begin to examine her.

"Now it's your turn, Moni. What colour is the sky?"

"The sky is red."

"No, no! the sky is blue, and the house is red; and now, what colour is the gate?"

"The gate is——"

But she has forgotten.

The children playing on the roadside, too, give Moni cause for profound reflection.

"Moni can't bear babies."

"Why can't Moni bear babies?"

"Because babies are stupid."

"But why do you say babies are stupid? How do you know they are?"

"Because Moni can't bear babies."

"But you don't know that the babies aren't very nice. Babies aren't naughty at all; perhaps they're much nicer than Moni."

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

“Moni can’t bear babies. Moni will kill babies—Moni will kill babies dead!”

But at that I get very grave, and say:

“Hush! The big babies have nothing to do with Moni, and if Moni tries to hurt them they’ll try to hurt Moni. And now be good, and take my hand.”

But Moni has not finished. After a while she begins again:

“Babies are very stupid! Moni will cut them up in pieces; Moni will give them a good slap!”

“And why should Moni give the babies a good slap?”

“Because Moni can’t bear babies.”

Then I scold her again, and this time it does seem to make some impression upon her, for she walks on with her hand in mine and her head bent very low. I am silent also. After a while she begins indignantly:

“Moni is making a very angry face.”

“She can make as angry a face as she likes—I don’t care! It would be much

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

nicer if she made a pretty face, and was good, and then I should love her very much."

She understands that, and soon she is running about happily again, and picking up acorns.

I needn't say that Moni has all the naughty ways of any other little spoilt Princess. When she doesn't want to run any more she declares flatly, "*Moni is stanca.*" The German word for "tired" has not yet come into her vocabulary.

The conversation about the babies has its parallel in a conversation about dogs which occurs almost daily.

In the first place, Monica runs after every dog she sees, and tries to beat him. Then she comes up to me, and says, "Moni can't bear dogs."

This gives me an opportunity for some general remarks, which haven't the slightest effect, for on the next day the same conversation is repeated.

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

Colours, children, and dogs are the standing topics of our walks.

Moni has no particular love for animals. The house-cat at Montauto, by name Bucki, is so well acquainted with this peculiarity of the little Princess, that whenever he sees her he flies as if for his life. If she succeeds in catching him, she pulls him by the tail; he scratches her, and she cries—a performance which takes place every time they meet. For the rest, it's immensely amusing to listen to her chatter. Very frequently the German word fails her, but an Italian one is instantly substituted. For example, the word "horse" doesn't come easily to her yet, and so she says instead: "Do look, Frau Kremer, what a beautiful *cavallochen* !" But she perfectly knows a mule from a horse; she can imitate the grunting of a pig in great style, and often she says, "This is what Gioconda does when she is asleep," and makes the most exaggerated snores. She is deeply

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

absorbed in the thought of what she'll do "when she's big."

"When Moni is a big lady," she tells me, "she will go all by herself in the train—*all* by herself, without any nurse, ever so far away, to Munich and Dresden, and then she'll throw all the luggage out of the window, and call 'Porter!' Then the porter will take all the luggage and Moni will drive in a droschky to the hotel, and say, 'Waiter, a dinner!' and Moni will eat a whole dinner all to herself, and then she'll drive away again."

"And will you go and see your dear Frau Kremer then?" I ask the little lady.

"Yes, and then Moni will visit Frau Kremer and Katie and Martha, and the little sick children in Dresden, when Moni is a real big lady," she repeats.

Still so tiny, and yet such a complicated little being, this four-year-old Duchess of Saxony! Every day she declares at least three or four times: "Moni loves nobody

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

but Hede," or "Frau Kremer," or most often, "Moni loves nobody but Lagler"—the chauffeur, who takes very little notice of her. I always forbid these speeches, and tell her that she must love everybody, but particularly her mamma. She usually adds then: "Moni loves nobody but mamma—and Frau Kremer and Hede." The child knows that she can wound her friends by saying these things, and it is hard to break her of the habit. Whenever I scold her or forbid her to do something "naughty," she begins at once: "Moni loves nobody but Lagler!"

It is charming when I ask her her name, and she says "Anna Monica Pia," adding, "Herz of Saxony."* When she is going to sleep, she often takes her mother and me and Haubold all in one embrace of her little arms, and so, pressing all our heads together, kisses each on the forehead. But

**Herzogin* (duchess): in the baby-language, *Herz*, which means "heart." (Translator's Note.)

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

whenever anything at Montauto happens not to please my little lady, she flatly declares that "Moni will go to Dresden to her Papa, and her brothers and sisters!" and a minute afterwards is maintaining that "Moni will *not* go to Dresden, but stay at Montauto with Mamma and Hede." So the days go by, and more than ever am I convinced that the chief hindrance to a suitable bringing-up of the little Princess lies in the fact that though she may not fully understand her peculiar relation to her parents, she yet instinctively feels it, and, so to speak, trades upon it. She knows that she is the gauge of battle, and makes good use of her knowledge. But, anyhow, here in Montauto a really serious system of training is out of the question, for I am not given a free hand in anything, and the child can always appeal to her mother, who is as irresponsible in her petting as in her wrath. Moreover, in my opinion, Monica has been made positively

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

neurotic by the treatment of Haubold, whom I should call almost an hysterical case. Although, like every untrained child, the little Princess sometimes needs a chas-tising hand, it is not right that Haubold should be unduly severe with her, and a quarter of an hour later nearly stifle her with kisses. Whither *that* sort of thing is tending I saw to my consternation this evening. For the first time I put my little Moni to bed entirely by myself, washed her, plaited her curly locks, heard her prayers, and then tucked her up, warm and cosy.

“Ah! please, dear Frau Kremer, stay a little while with Moni.” So I sat down on a chair beside her cot. “Dear Frau Kremer—*do* stroke Moni—please, please!”—and she drew my hand to her neck and turned her head, and then kept drawing my hand along her neck from ear to little chin. As she did so a peculiar look came over the child’s face, which positively dis-

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

torted it; and her whole body seemed to stretch itself, so that I stopped my stroking of her neck in great distress of mind.

“Now, that’s enough, Moni. Good-night, and sleep beautifully, my darling!” I said, and got up to go. But she begged and begged so excitedly for “more stroking” that I could scarcely quiet her. Just then Haubold came in, and said crossly: “What is this? She wants to be stroked? No, no—that’s not allowed. You must go to sleep and be good!”

She then told me that it was a silly habit of the child’s to want to be stroked to sleep, and that this fancy had taken such a tremendous hold upon her that they had been obliged strictly to forbid it. But who accustomed the child to this stroking (which appears to me to have had a pathological effect upon her) I have not yet found out, even from the Princess—who, by the way, has come back with the automobile from Bologna, and was within an ace of having

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

a serious accident on the road. There was a fog, and, at a sharp turning, the car nearly ran down a precipice; but the chauffeur managed to bring it to a standstill at the last moment.

The Princess told the story laughing, and with no sign of having been frightened; but she seems to be extraordinarily insensible to physical pain, and possibly her sanguine nature helps her to recover quickly. She herself is conscious of this attribute, and very proud of it. For instance, she told me about the broken leg that she got last May in a fall from her bicycle. She had gone out early to visit a sick woman, who lived some distance away, got a side-slip at a muddy corner, and was thrown off. Some passers-by rendered her "first aid," and then a doctor came and said it was a compound fracture above the ankle, and brought her home in a cab. When she arrived she called out cheerfully to the terrified Hedwig, "It's nothing, Hede; I've only broken my leg."

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

She was on her back for a long time and suffered terribly, but less from the fracture than from the heat, which even a more exaggerated *décolletage* than usual did not save her from. Then she showed me her naked foot, and laid it upon my lap. I admired the wonderful reknitting of the bones, and then, of course, I had to go on to admire her flexible toes, moving about in the air like fingers.

CHAPTER VI

November 5.

THE automobile is the great excitement of to-day; already the Princess has driven to town and to the baths in it. It is a dark green coupé—a Mercedes-car, and cost 28,000 *lire*. In addition to it, however, the two “body-guard” cabs are constantly used, one of them driven by fat Tonnino, with his pleasant rosy face, and the other by a thin Pietro with a pale face. One of these stands at the Porta Romana, and the other at the Piazza San Trinità. After her bath, the Princess drove to see her friend, the well-known English art-critic, Miss Zimmern. The lady was born in Hamburg of Jewish parents, who then took her to England, so that English has become her mother-tongue, and she speaks it better than German. She has been settled in

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

Florence for about twenty years, living on a modest income, earned chiefly by her pen. Her name is often to be seen in English periodicals. She is, it seems, the Princess's most intimate friend.

The house in which Miss Zimmern lives is also partly used as an *ambulanza*, and the Princess constantly goes there in her favourite rôle of Good Samaritan. When she spends the morning in this way—but it's not exactly an everyday occurrence—she usually takes three changes of dress with her in her big silk bag. She wears a fencing-dress first at the morning's lesson. Of these she has two, one in white, and the other in black, velvet. Then comes the bathing-dress for the swimming-bath, and, finally, the nurse's costume for the hospital; for she helps to bandage the sick and wash the instruments there. Thus she has five changes of dress in the early part of the day.

After lunch she usually puts on a tea-

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

gown—that's a sixth change; then after dinner, if she is going out—which happens nearly every evening—she dashes into full dress. That's the seventh time. And at night she puts on her nightgown—the eighth change!

The day seldom goes by without as many changes as this, and, of course, washing—if possible, from head to foot—takes up a good deal of time also.

The Princess sent us up the automobile from the hospital, and had given the chauffeur a message to say that I was to drive with Monica through the town, and then up the hill to Fiesole. That was indeed a bit of pure joy, especially as Monica and I are getting to be real friends. As we were driving through the town she suddenly threw both her little arms round my neck and kissed me heartily.

On the way to Fiesole a truly marvellous panorama unfolds itself. It rises before the eyes like a magnificent fresco, the

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

colouring kaleidoscopic in its brilliancy. Amongst other things, we passed by the Princess's first house, the much-talked-of Villa Papignano, which stands in San Domenico. It was here that the notorious Muth-affair took place.

The afternoon brought further varieties. Belucci, the laundry-man, appeared upon the scene, with his *boraccio* full of linen. The history of Belucci is that he bought the *boraccio* and its accompanying pony from the Princess. When she first came here she always used this characteristic native vehicle, which was afterwards replaced by the automobile. So now Belucci appears every Saturday and Monday, throned upon his *boraccio*, amid a pyramid of laundry-baskets. He is a pleasant, smiling man, on whose account even Monica gives up half an hour of her beloved afternoon sleep, chiefly so that she may have a ride upon the dear old brown pony.

I wanted to make use of this first occa-

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

sion to send some clothes to the wash, so Haubold seized the opportunity of telling me, in the name of the Princess, that I was expected to pay for my own laundry—an economical arrangement which is nullified by the fact that she thinks nothing of buying as many as twelve dozen very expensive tablecloths, when she happens to see a pattern which takes her fancy.

She goes in for gorgeous linen of every kind, and her underclothing is of most expensive simplicity. It is made of miraculously fine white batiste, and trimmed with the loveliest real lace. For the most part it comes from Paris. Every single piece bears her monogram with the crown above. Monica also has exquisite underlinen—most of it made at Radloff and Böttcher's in Dresden. Her linen also is embroidered with a little crown, and nearly all trimmed with Valenciennes lace. The Princess's table-linen is particularly beautiful; it is entirely unpatterned, and of the glossiest

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

linen, richly decorated with broad insertions of a most uncommon description of Florentine work, a guipure-like embroidery, something like Hardanger work. Even the napkins have these insertions, and she has it upon several of her white tea-gowns. She is a great connoisseur in embroideries, and showed me, on some of her house-dresses, a very peculiar Celtic pattern—of runes, she said—which she has had copied by Florentine embroiderers. It is extraordinarily lovely.

.

This evening the Princess gave me the manuscript of one of her stories to read in my room. Her friends induced her to write down the artless little tale, which Miss Zimmern has translated for an English publisher. A friend, Count Manini, is to do the illustrations. She tells me that her uncle, Prince of Ysenburg, used often to tell the story at his castle, where the

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

thing actually happened, and made a deep impression upon every one who witnessed it.

I began my reading with great curiosity:

“On the very top of the castle-roof a stork had built his nest, and he soon brought a lady stork to live in it. After a short time the little stork wife had some eggs to sit on, and soon the father and mother were busy with the feeding of the hungry young birds. Often the father stork flew great distances to pick up frogs and other dainties, while the little mother sat at home in the nest. One day her fate came to her in the shape of a stranger-stork, who alighted on the roof a little way from the nest. Steadily the two looked at one another. Just then the husband came back, saw the couple, and flew off again. Immovable sat the little mother stork on the nest. Nearer came the stranger, never taking his eyes off her. Then the husband came back with a lot of other storks, and they

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

all fell upon the stranger and mangled him so terribly with their beaks that he soon lay bleeding and half-dead at the edge of the roof. And so he lay for two days, still looking with his dying eyes at the immovable little mother stork on the nest. One day when her husband left her for a short time she flew down from the nest and brought the dying stork a little something to eat. She did that many times. But on the third day he died. He gave one tender look at his distant love, and then he slipped down to the ground from the edge of the roof. And the little mother stork sat immovable on the nest until the young ones were fledged. And then she rose slowly, took one of the young birds in her bill and flung it down to the ground, and it was killed. Just as quietly she took up the second young one and flung it down too, and then the third. Then she went back to the nest, and sat there immovable as before. The father stork, flying back, saw what a terrible

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

thing had happened, and circled miserably round the spot. But the little stork mother sat quite still in her stony calm; she would not have anything to eat, and in a few days she sank back dead in the nest. Then the poor father stork gave one wild flap of his wings and flew away, never to return."

The story is very simply and tenderly written. She shows a certain talent for narration by leaving the tragedy of the fable to speak for itself, without any comment. Of course, if it were printed, even with illustrations, its chief, perhaps its only, recommendation would be the fact that the Princess Louise is the author! Well, if she were Queen now, as she might have been, Carmen Sylva would have to look to her laurels as a Royal Poetess!

.
November 6.

Moni is getting fonder and fonder of me, and I think even the Princess is beginning

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

to lose the feeling of reserve which she could not avoid having, and occasionally let me see rather plainly. "Do you know what you are, Frau Kremer?" little Moni asked me this morning when I was dressing her, and she looked at me roguishly, and laughed a sly little laugh. "No; do tell me, Moni." Then she pulled my ear down to her mouth, and said mysteriously, "You're a little baggage!" She thought it a huge joke, but I had a sort of feeling that the old proverb might have its application: "Little pitchers have long ears."* Well, it would be a sign of success, anyhow, and my hopes wax high!

.

I don't know what the reason may have been, but to-day I was requested to visit the Princess in her bedroom. This, indeed, is everybody's thoroughfare; it is a mark of the great irregularity in the house-

* "Wie die Alten sunen, so zwitscherten die Jungen."

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

hold that none of the servants thinks anything of walking into her bedroom without even knocking.

While she was talking with me, my glance strayed to the glittering gold cross on the prayer-book by her bedside. She must have seen, for she turned round and handed me the book, laughing and showing her lovely teeth.

“Look! Isn’t it clever of me?”

I opened the prayer-book, and couldn’t believe my eyes when I saw the title-page: Goethe’s *Faust*! Clever, indeed! *Faust* in a prayer-book cover with a golden cross on it. . . . She had it done through a friend, when she was in exile with a sanctimonious old Countess at Ronno, and had to go to Mass every day—“so that she mightn’t be absolutely *sick* with boredom,” she says. And thus *Faust* became her daily reading! As a matter of fact, she is always quoting from it, but, curiously enough, only from one passage, that be-

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

ginning, "The Holy Church has a stomach healthy." *

.

We *have* had a busy day! The Princess's things came from Salzburg. They are her private property, and were sent after her four years ago when she fled from Dresden, or, rather, as she says, "were simply flung at her parents' heads at Salzburg." They are her dowry, so to speak—her personal presents and souvenirs—and we are now unpacking them in the garage. The most important thing is a magnificent Bechstein grand; then comes a wardrobe of very beautiful workmanship, which was a present from Queen Carola. There are some antique carved black oak pieces also—the very things to furnish forth that bare, bleak vestibule! Naturally, they have, none of them, been improved by their four years' storage in the

* "Die Kirche hat einen guten Magen" (Bayard Taylor's translation).

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

lumber-rooms at Salzburg. The black oak especially has got quite grey with accumulated dust. It was a sight to see the Princess working at it! She got hold of the dusters and brushes herself, and brushed the legs of the tables, and polished all the dim old stuff with a vigorous hand—first the table, the legs of which are decorated with carved horses' heads; then a chest, a footstool, some chairs, and a cupboard. These things are to stand in the vestibule; the grand piano is coming into the dining-room; and the oil-painting of her pet dog, which formerly hung in Wachwitz, is now put up over the mantelpiece. On the opposite wall one of the men hung up her hunting-trophies—several wild birds, horns, and so on. The moths have got into the birds' plumage, and some most deplorable specimens are hung up very high so that they may not be seen. We came across a couple of pairs of old prayer-rugs, which I sewed together in all haste and hung up as

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

portières, so that the hitherto bare and inhospitable hall, whose only charm was the crimson stair-carpets, now looks quite warm and cosy.

I felt a great pang at the disposition of a fine old chest, which had also been a present from Queen Carola. It is entirely covered with a design of chestnut-leaves in bronze, the centre being left clear for an inscription, the well-known lines:

Glorious,' said the Saxon monarch,
'Is my country in its pride;
Silver in its mountain caverns
Glittering lies on every side.'''*

The sight of this magnificent chest evidently gave the Princess real physical pain, for she instantly presented it to Haubold!

Amongst the finest things were some wonderful Buddhas in bronze and carved

* " 'Herrlich,' sprach der Fürst von Sachsen,
'Ist mein Land und seine Macht;
Silber hegen seine Berge
Wohl in manchem tiefen Schacht.' "

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

ivory, presents from one of her brothers, who brought them home after a tour in India. The costly Persian carpets had suffered most of all—they were absolutely eaten away by moths. There are only about three that can be used at all, and, by this means, Moni has at last got a rug for her bedroom! The second is coming into the Princess's room, and the third is to go under the table in the dining-room, so that we shall actually have something to protect our feet from the cold stones. When I saw the troubled look of the Princess, I promised her to do my utmost to restore the carpets to some of their original beauty. She was greatly pleased, and immediately after lunch she went down into the town herself and bought wool for the purpose, and I have already done a lot this afternoon. She was visibly delighted when I told her in the evening that I was getting on very well. She thanked me over and over again.

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

Most of the things were put back in the boxes again. There were some kitchen utensils amongst them, and very plain ones too—cups, saucepans, lamps, and so on. In the end I, too, got an old carpet, so that even *my* bedroom is beginning to lose some of its uncomfortable look.

The only thing besides the carpet which the Princess found worthy of a place in her own room was a really excellent picture of Prince Ernest, otherwise “Ernie” or “Nosikins,”* as she used to call him; he was her favourite, it seems. But she never speaks of any of her children except by pet names. Thus she calls the Crown Prince George “Juri,” Prince Christian “Tia,” Princess Margaret “Ete,” or “Eterl,” Princess Maria Alix “Riali,” and Princess Anna Monica Pia “Moni,” or “Cherry Cheeks.”† She told me, too, how she came to call her Monica. There’s an old

* “Schnute-mannerl.”

† “Kirchen-mannerl.”

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

picture at Wachwitz of St. Augustine and his mother Monica, hence the name.

.

November 7.

I learnt to-day, for the first time, that the Princess has a real lady-in-waiting—Countess Fugger—who at present is staying in Munich. The Grand Duke of Tuscany did not wish that his daughter should be without feminine companionship in her exile, and therefore appointed the Countess to this post. But she seems to spend the greater part of the year in Munich, and evidently by the Princess's desire. It is well known how that lady rebels against the almost Spanish rigidity of Court etiquette; but of course the Countess is always ready to come to Florence at a moment's notice. The Princess intends to have her here for Christmas; but, indeed, it would not be at all a bad plan if she could only make up her mind to keep her

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

permanently, for the house terribly needs some organization. The Princess leaves her servants entirely to themselves, so that they do just as much or as little as they like, and that is remarkably little. The best thing about Fräulein Haubold is that she *does* make some sort of an attempt, in spite of her shocking Italian, to control the servants. But the Princess would be spared many other unpleasantnesses, too, if she had somebody to influence her. For example, the following: there was an offensive article in one of the Florentine newspapers lately, which intimated that anyone who wished to see the Countess Montignoso fencing in man's attire with the *jeunesse dorée* of the town, need only go any morning to Giollini's fencing-saloon, where that pleasure was to be had. She herself didn't much mind this, but her friends and acquaintances, especially Miss Zimmer, urgently advised her either to give up this fancy entirely—and that she wouldn't

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

do, for fencing is such good exercise and suits her admirably—or else to have her lessons at the Villa. She consented to this latter suggestion, and so the big room on the ground-floor, near the billiard-room, which has hitherto been unused, is now being arranged as a fencing-saloon, and we are expecting Signor Giollini to-morrow morning.

CHAPTER VII

WE started off early again to-day at cleaning and brushing and carpet-darning. In the afternoon, immediately after lunch, the Princess asked me to come into town with her—for the first time. In spite of her comparatively short stature, she walks unusually fast, so that it is quite difficult to keep up with her. We went into various shops, and bought more materials for carpet-darning. On the way she took the opportunity of talking to me, with extraordinary frankness, of her family and money affairs, as well as of her life at home and in Dresden. At home she had, as she says, less than many a poor girl—only fifty marks a month, out of which she had to buy all her clothes. Then she came to Dresden, where she had lots of money, and where she could have lived happily enough

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

if it hadn't been for the unbearable tyranny of the then King. Indeed, she lays upon him the moral responsibility for everything that has happened. But her after-life must have been terrible, too—the time when she was with Giron in Switzerland and on the Riviera. She must have had a genuine passion for Giron, though as time went on it changed to something very different; for it is notorious that, especially when they were in the South, he treated her with daily increasing insolence and unkindness, so that at last she came actually to dislike him, and ran away from him. Then came a terrible episode. She was sent, by her parents' desire, into exile at Ronno, to a horribly bigoted and disgustingly grasping old Countess, who had been chosen for her by her no less bigoted mother—the Grand Duchess of Tuscany. The idea was to “drive the devil out of her,” by a system of punishment and semi-starvation!

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

A more pleasant memory is that of the days in the Isle of Wight.

I must say it was painful to me to listen to these revelations, and I don't exactly understand why she told me so much. Can she really be beginning to trust me? She hasn't said so in so many words, although she has already taken many opportunities of praising me, especially for my system with Monica.

To-day, also, I became acquainted with Miss Zimmern. The Princess herself took me there. We went up three steep dark steps into the old Palazzo Buondelmonti. (Every lodging-house in Italy is called a *palazzo*.) The lady received us at the head of the stairs, and shook hands with me very cordially. She asked me at once to come and see her on her "at-home" day—Monday afternoon—and then we went for a short time into her little drawing-room. She showed me, too, her dining-room, studio, bedroom, veranda, and

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

the two cats—the big grey “Michelot” and the black “Sin.” Why he should be called “Sin” is not very clear, for he is a neuter.

In the studio a little terrier came up to us barking. Miss Zimmern’s dainty little round face is lit by black eyes under strongly-marked dark eyebrows, and she has very fluffy white hair. A distinguished face! The Princess calls her “*Du*” and “Ninnili,” and they kiss at meeting and parting. Miss Zimmern, however, does not call the Princess “*Du*”—she usually speaks to her as “my dear” or “dear child,” but always with the “you.” She gives one the impression of a really motherly kind of friend. On Monday she is going to show me some of the beautiful churches—the Duomo and the Palazzo Vecchio. The Princess seemed quite anxious for me to accept the invitation. On the way through the town she showed me the Magdalen Asylum, where Saxon nurses

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

are employed. At first she very often went there, until an order came from the Saxon Government forbidding her to do so, which deeply offended her. So now she has only the *ambulanza*. Of course, she doesn't think of doing the rough work there, the lightest part of which is the scrubbing of the floors!

.

November 4.

To-day the Princess had her first "home" fencing lesson. She has a great opinion of Signor Giollini, though she's always saying what an atrociously ugly old thing he is. He arrived at about eight o'clock, and was shown into a little boudoir near the "fencing-saloon" to put on his costume. Shortly afterwards the Princess appeared in her white fencing-dress, which consists of knee-breeches and a padded coat. She had thrown a light dressing-jacket over it, and was coquetting with a cigarette. I was in-

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

vited to bring Moni to the fencing-saloon, and see her do some passes with Giollini. So we went; and the Princess first showed us the "pitch," the weapons—rapiers and foils—the masks, and then began her display with Giollini. He told her what to do, and I was struck with her dexterity. She has been practising fencing nearly every morning for a year and a half, and has acquired a certain brilliancy of execution. She declares that it was of the greatest assistance to her, after she broke her leg, in restoring the necessary pliancy to the ankle, and considers it such an excellent exercise in every way that nobody ought to neglect it. She recommends it to everyone. It improves the general health most wonderfully, she says.

And now, of course, Moni insists on having a little fencing-dress of black velvet and a little rapier, too, so that she can fence with Mamma! Except for the shortness of her legs, which somewhat spoils the ef-

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

fect, the costume is very becoming to the Princess.

Her opponent is most extraordinary-looking. Signor Giollini is in the middle fifties, bald, with red moustache and hair; he squints, and is indeed most remarkably ugly. But his figure is as slender and as supple as a boy's. Though he dare not permit himself a spare inch of flesh, his voice is repulsively oily, like a fat lady's at a fair! And his manner to the Princess is fawning; yet she plainly likes him, and made him stay to breakfast, to Haubold's great indignation. Giollini was once a non-commissioned officer,* and now lives comfortably enough as the most renowned fencing-master in Florence.

At breakfast the Princess heard that a baby had arrived in a peasant's house close by. She was instantly electrified, and it was settled there and then that we should pay mother and child a visit. It was ar-

*Unteroffizier.

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

ranged for the evening, for Moni wanted to see the *bambino* too, and had to have her sleep first. The Princess put on for the occasion her most elegant frock, of heavy white silk with a silver Grecian border, and cut very low, as usual. And so we all set off—the Princess, Monica, Haubold, My Insignificance, and Bucki, the house-cat. Arrived at the house, we ascended a narrow staircase and entered a very simple but amazingly clean and good-sized room, where stood a bed as vast as any we have at the villa. The woman lay there with her *bambino* in her arms—a remarkably fine, chubby child, who was duly admired. The Princess, who is very knowledgeable in such matters, gave the peasant woman a great deal of excellent advice, and told her the most important things to do. At such moments she is kindness itself, and she seems to enjoy the whole thing intensely. But she is *as* she is: once the visit is satisfactorily accomplished, the episode be-

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

comes a thing of the past, and *bambino* is entirely forgotten, until something or other shall occur to remind the Princess of his existence, when she will immediately become as enthusiastic about him as she was on this, his first appearance in this troublous world!

When we returned, Torello was waiting in front of the house with his *boraccio* full of eggs and poultry, and was greeted by the Princess with visible satisfaction. This acquaintance she also made at the *ambulanza*, whose presiding genius, Professor and Doctor Banzetti, frequently claims her services. And one day a young bricklayer—this same Torello—was brought there, having almost lost a finger through blood-poisoning. It is to her unremitting care that Torello owes the preservation of his finger; but it remained so stiff and swollen that he had to give up his bricklaying, and now he drives a thriving trade in eggs and poultry, for which the Princess is among

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

his best customers. Almost every other day he arrives with his *boraccio* and his donkey at Villa Montauto. He is quite at home here. He puts his donkey in the garage, and when he has delivered his wares in the kitchen, he goes, by her orders, to the dining-room, where I am now to be found at table with her and Monica; for some days ago she requested me to take my meals with them for the future. The Princess likes his nonchalance, and, as he stands before her (wholly at his ease, but with all the native deference of the Italian), she has quite long conversations with him, and then tells him to go to the kitchen and get Rosina to give him something to eat. I have seldom seen so cunning a face as this young peasant has. Slender and sinewy, he is the very type of a primitive Italian. His stockings are held up by a red wool shawl, which is wound round his hips, and the sleeves of his gaily-striped shirt are usually turned up to the elbows.

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

A gay scarf is draped loosely round his neck, and a broad-brimmed hat is naturally not lacking—the regular Italian workman, in short, so frequently to be seen in Germany!

On the whole, Torello, with his brown face and his dark, shining eyes, is a handsome fellow; but cunning glitters in those melting eyes, and slyness puckers the corners of that smiling mouth. He is particularly amiable to Moni—always gives her a ride on his donkey, or carries her about in his arms. Moni rewards him with the frankest affection. In spite of his youth—he is only twenty-seven—Torello has long been married, and is the father of seven children, to one of whom the Princess is actually godmother. Though I can't give any definite reason for it, the fellow is most unsympathetic to me, and I can't at all understand the Princess's evident liking for him. Where male creatures are concerned, she seems to have no perception whatever;

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

all her knowledge of human nature, otherwise remarkable, seems to fail her—an observation which I have frequently made before in such cases.

Regularly every Thursday an old street-singer appears at the villa. He sings to the guitar in a cracked tenor, but with great power of expression—chiefly old Tuscan *ritornelli*, but also modern songs by Tosti and Ferrara. The Princess always goes out on the balcony to listen, and so do Monica and I. Apparently this is another of her “pets”! He certainly cannot complain of any lack of attention on her part. She hangs on his words with an almost yearning interest, and often translates and explains the songs, which are mostly in dialect, to me. Assuredly *this* is not an expensive fancy of hers, for when the bard has sung for the ladies’ amusement for at least half an hour, Monica, by her mother’s desire, takes him down his reward—in the shape of a *lira*!

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

To-night the Princess went off to a party *en grande toilette*. She has a tear-off calendar in her bedroom, upon which she regularly sets down her invitations and engagements. Rarely does she have a blank day. When I say, "I hope you will enjoy yourself," she unfailingly declares that she is going to a dull married couple's or to an old lady's, and carefully adds: "Frightfully boring!" But she seems to enjoy the boredom fairly well—by dint of getting accustomed to it. She never returns hospitalities, especially the more formal ones. She scarcely could, indeed, for the accommodation in her household makes it almost impossible even to receive visitors here. In the whole overgrown villa there is not a single room which the lady of the house could well use as a drawing-room. The only one that could be thought of in such a connection is her own little writing-room, and even that has no separate entrance. To reach it, one has first to trav-

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

erse Monica's bedroom, where, without even a screen in front of it, stands the nursery maid's bed; then one proceeds through the Princess's own bedroom, and so at last reaches the little boudoir.

When people *do* come, they have to be shown into that wretched dining-room. The Princess says she made this arrangement on purpose, so that she might avoid any kind of general hospitality. Her few intimates she either takes through her bedroom to the little boudoir, or else sees in the bedroom itself. She is so free-and-easy that she doesn't mind a bit, especially as it's her favourite room. Indeed, she ought to have lived in the time of Louis XIV., who reintroduced the old Roman custom of "receiving" in bed and while dressing. For she permits herself a degree of freedom in her personal habits which does not at all contribute towards the servants' respect for her. In this connection she is amazingly naïve, and seems not at all to

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

perceive that it is chiefly her own fault if she has endless trouble with her domestics. When she had men-servants about her, of course it was ever so much worse.

Fretfully, and yet with an unmistakable accent of pride, she told me: "I shall have no more men-servants. I've had the most frightful trouble with the creatures. Besides drinking and thieving, I was never sure what other horrors there would be. After some time they began literally to pursue me. I actually had a cook, a hideous old fellow of about sixty, who ran into my room, and tried to make love to me; and when I wanted to kick him out, the brute began to blackmail me, and said if I didn't give him 3,000 *lire* he'd tell everyone that he had been my lover. Of course, I lodged an information against him; but as there were some stabbing-cases about just then, I got scared, and determined to have no more men-servants. Giovanni, of whom Hedwig has no doubt told you, was cer-

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

tainly a good, useful fellow, and Moni was very fond of him. I dismissed *him* on account of drink. Hedwig liked him, and is still angry because I discharged him."

Haubold confirms this, and tells me that Giovanni was really an excellent creature, but that the Italian servants, particularly Rosina, intrigued against him, and got the Princess to dismiss him. She has never forgiven Rosina for it, she says. And the Italians played an abominable trick in intercepting a letter of Giovanni's to her. There had been a frightful scene about it in the summer, which had made her quite ill.

But, indeed, the mistress of the house is to be blamed for all this disorder amongst the Italian servants. Haubold was frightfully indignant lately because the Princess had tickled Severina's cheeks when she passed her by on the steps, and she was also vexed because, when Gioconda had rheumatism, the Princess nursed her and massaged her herself.

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

She never calls the Italian girls anything but "*Cara*," and always gives her orders to them in a pleading, instead of a commanding, tone. But even the German ones have no cause to complain of any harshness. She usually calls the nursemaid "Lieselmann"—her name is Liesa Hürlemann—and Hedwig is always "Hedelmann." Moni of course imitates her mamma. But the Princess really injures herself when she does such things as this. For instance, I was in the next room, and heard a tremendous noise of laughing and talking, palpably from at least three women, in her bedroom. I entered. Hürlemann and Haubold were, not to put too fine a point upon it, simply splitting their sides with laughter. The Princess had made a joke, and I had to be told it too, so she began again: "It was at a masked ball. One lady, who was dressed as a Spaniard, was asked by a gentleman: '*Beau masque*, I suppose you come straight from Madrid?'

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

The lovely lady answered in a fright: 'Why, can you smell it?' " There was a fresh burst of laughter, and I stood there feeling like a fool. . . .

Lately, when the carpets were unpacked, we had another display of her incredible free-and-easiness. A prayer-carpet was taken out, and the Italian workmen made some remarks about it, upon which the Princess felt herself impelled to explain in the most circumstantial manner what it was used for; and, not satisfied with that, she went on to show them how Moham-medans said their prayers. She knelt down on the carpet, with her face towards the East, lifted her hands on high, palms outwards, then threw herself down on her face, which looked very amusing, with her slender figure! The workmen were divided between laughter and embarrassment, and the episode ended amid universal hilarity. Naturally enough, "Her Imperial Highness" is forgotten at such moments, and

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

the consequence is that everyone does just what he likes, and that no one in the house has any respect for the Princess. Unfortunately, this does not apply to the servants alone, but—and this is the important point—also to her little daughter. The Princess told me very indignantly that King George had once said to her that she was risking her prestige with her children by her eccentricities; but I think His old Majesty was right.

I simply cannot describe how difficult all the arrangements here make my position with the child. Certainly I quickly succeeded in making her fond of me. She always lets me bathe and dress her now, takes her daily walks with me, and learns pretty poems out of her countless picture-books, which she then proudly recites to her mamma. When I arrived, little Moni didn't know a single rhyme by heart! She had picture-books, but nobody had bothered to look at them with her. She learns easily,

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

for she is remarkably intelligent; but she is full of little naughtinesses, and often shows so much cunning that one needs to be very much on the alert to get the better of her. She frequently learns a rhyme by heart, and when she knows it perfectly, intentionally puts in some silly, babyish word, and then she always says the rhyme with that mistake, so as to annoy her governess and have the fun of making her angry. Of course, if one *does* show any vexation, one is done for.

But worst of all for the child is her extraordinary situation with regard to her parents. She has a French animal-book, with a picture of a lion and a lioness, and this recalled to me a nursery rhyme of my childhood, which she picked up very quickly:

“ Two lions were watching and watching one day,
But papa-lion got very tired, they say;
So he turned on his side and he turned him away,
And mamma-lion said, ‘ Ha ! you’re turning away ! ’ ”

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

Now when Moni was reciting this verse to her mamma, she said it with the following variation:

“ A King and a Queen were watching one day,
But the poor King, he got very tired, they say;
So he turned on his side, and he turned him away,
And the Queen said, ‘ Ha-ha ! so you’re turning
away! ’ ” *

What on earth is a poor governess to do? One’s work is simply endless—one doesn’t know where to begin. What an effect these early days will have upon the child in after-life! The older she grows, the worse it will be. Often the task seems beyond me, especially as the Princess, in her crazy adoration for her darling, never thinks of correcting her, finds an excuse for the naughtiest things she does, and simply overwhelms her with exclamations of enchantment at her beauty. Little Monica

* “ Ein Löwenpaar liegt auf der Lauer,
Das Warten wird ihm schliesslich sauer;
Der Löwe legt sich auf den Bauch hin,
Die Löwin denkt: du legst dich auch hin.”

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

is much too clever not to understand all this. The many photographs, the thousands of post-cards with her little picture on them, which the Princess sends all over the place, naturally do not escape Monica's attention. Sometimes she stands proudly before the glass and declares: "When Moni is photographed she looks like this . . . ;" and with that she puts on her photographic face, usually a grotesque smile, with which no photographer would think of taking her. But it all shows that the child is conscious of her power, and she makes use of this to torment and tyrannize over her mother and all her surroundings. It is clear that she must lose much of her natural sweetness under these conditions, and no one—not even the mother—gains anything by the spoiling, for not a soul among them ever thinks of teaching the child to show any consideration for other people, so that Monica is at present simply a little egoist, without a single sign of any un-

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

selfish emotion. The desire to be sweet and kind has never yet been awakened in the much-to-be-pitied little creature, so that she has become a small tyrant. All this is of the highest importance, and every day that is lost is a separate injury to the child's soul. But I think that I could easily have found out the way to her heart, and I should have perfect confidence in myself; but nothing is of any use while the mother's influence is prevalent. That much is certain. No system will have any effect upon Monica unless she can be taken away from Montauto. If only the Princess would agree to give her up! She did say to me to-day that she was very much pleased with me and my methods, and that I absolutely *must* stay with Moni. . . . With all my heart, but not here in Montauto!

CHAPTER VIII

November 9.

THIS morning I went shopping with the Princess, and then we went to Gilli's, a very fashionable café, and drank our coffee and ate some delicious Paris *brioche*s at little marble tables, the Princess herself fetching the cakes from the counter. The automobile came to take us home, and Moni was very naughty at lunch. As Gioconda was still in bed with rheumatism, Haubold waited at table, and it was easy to see how much she disliked having to serve me. From the beginning I have been troubled by her senseless jealousy, which has daily increased as the Princess and Monica get to like me better. It seems to me that she is an incarnation here of the hostility to my mission; and, as a matter of fact, it signifies more to her than to any-

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

one else whether Monica is given up or not, for once the child leaves Montauto, *she* will be superfluous. Here it is, I think, that my greatest danger lies; and so I may as well throw a little more light upon her. She was, originally, like myself, appointed by the Court. Before Monica's birth she arrived at Lindau with the midwife (also appointed by the Court), and so may be said to have taken care of little Pia Monica from the very first moment. But the Princess found her domineering ways and her tempers very tiresome, though, like a clever diplomatist, she desired to get rid of her politely. She therefore wrote to the Court "that the little Princess was getting bigger, and that it would be necessary to pay some attention to the question of religion. Haubold was Evangelical, and she would like now to have a Catholic nurse." I needn't say she wasn't really troubling much about religion—she said that because she knew it would have the desired effect in Dresden;

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

and, as a matter of fact, Haubold *was* recalled. In her place came Fräulein Muth.

After *her* inglorious departure, and during the ensuing conflict with the Court, Haubold offered her services to the Princess again. And she, inconsequent as she ever is, re-engaged her, at her own expense, for Monica. But again she wearied of the woman's tempers, and sent her, on unlimited sick-leave, to Bautzen, and wrote to the mother that Doctor Kreyll, the assistant-surgeon in the *ambulanza* (and also the Princess's family doctor), had told her that Fräulein Haubold's health was by no means unimpaired. (For that, Haubold hates Dr. Kreyll with a deadly hatred.) But after a month she was back again in Florence—and with the Princess, who saw no way out of it.

But one must record in Haubold's favour that, despite her precarious health, she is the only person who keeps the household together. She is simply indefatigable, but,

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

at the same time, inexplicably jealous of any and every woman who comes in contact with the Princess, and for whom she shows the faintest liking. One can scarcely mention any woman except the female servants—certainly no intimate acquaintance of hers—about whom Haubold has not something disagreeable to say. Her feeling has something distinctly unhealthy about it. I don't know how it was that I came in for the honour of being told that "she simply *could* not leave her!" "She would never go away, or allow herself to be dismissed. She would always come back—always be ready to perish for the Princess. Of course, she knew that you couldn't *depend* upon her. But it was no good—that was how it was with her, and there was no use talking." I must say it was rather frightening to hear the little passionate creature talking like that.

The Princess told me of another occasion on which she had wished to dismiss

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

Haubold; but when the latter heard the first hint of it, she flung herself in convulsions at her mistress's feet, which made the Princess feel quite ill, and the outcome was that Haubold stayed. Somehow she seems to me like the evil genius of the household. Once I came upon her with her head in her hand, groaning to herself, "*Malatesda, malatesda!*" Like all half-educated people, she loves to express herself in Italian, which those who know declare she pronounces shockingly, and with all sorts of absurd Saxon idioms. I asked her what "*malatesda*" meant.

"Unlucky," she cried, smiling amid her tears.

"But how are you unlucky?"

She wasn't able to say.

The Princess calls her "hysterical," and says she pities little Monica, who suffers most from her. But as to *changing* the condition of affairs—she doesn't seem to have the nerve for that.

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

This afternoon, she took me into her study with her, and begged me to help her with her correspondence. On her birthday—September 2—she had received from “Louisa-maniacs” in Saxony no less than 2,000 presents, and letters and post-cards besides; and she makes a point of acknowledging every single thing. During her stay in Munich she ordered several thousand post-card photographs of herself and Monica, and now she has taken a fancy to direct every one of these herself, in acknowledgment. I had also delivered faithfully the millions of “greetings” with which I had been entrusted on leaving Saxony, and she had received them with enthusiasm.

So now we were to share the work. I had all the letters and post-cards before me. I read out the addresses to her (and put them down myself in alphabetical order in a special note-book) while she wrote on the back, under the picture, a word of thanks, and her own or Monica’s name.

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

Then I took the inscribed post-cards and blotted them, for she writes very black, and we didn't want any ugly smudges.

Letters and cards still come daily from her Saxon home—almost all from so-called “small folk.” She is so accustomed to these demonstrations that they can hardly be of much importance to her in themselves, but she has her own reasons for carefully fostering sentiment—no doubt with the idea that by this means she may form a party in Saxony to support her plans and desires.

They are a quaint lot, these “Louisiamaniacs”! I could never have believed in such sentimentality, hysteria, and generally exaggerated nonsense if I had not seen it myself in the letters they write. It is astounding, to say the least of it. The suggestions they make!

I have already hinted that the Princess herself rather makes fun of her adorers, some of whom do actually belong to the so-

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

called *crème de la crème* of Dresden. Of these letter-writers quite one of the most prominent is a very young girl. The Princess says every minute, "Oh, here's little A—— again!" or, "That comes from little A——!" Or else, "As I hear from little A—— in Dresden." . . . And one day a box of carnations came from Dresden—"little A——" again. Another day there arrived a telegram from "little A——," so absurdly sentimental that the Princess first read it to me melodramatically, and then threw it into the fire, saying, "That's going *too far!*"

Little A—— evidently has a wild adoration for her, and writes to her every day. Why, she actually says "*Du*" to the Princess! I imagine the young goose implored her to let herself be called "*Du*"—and she didn't know how to get out of it; but when one thinks that even the elderly Miss Zimmermann, her most intimate friend, who kisses her at meeting and parting, has too much

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

tact to return the Royal "*Du*" it's pretty plain that this "flapper" has lost her head a little—and it's no less comical when one realizes that "little A——" is the daughter of a Town Councillor* at Dresden.

Of course I do not mean that all the letter and post-card writers are of this idiotic type. There are many, especially among the poorer classes, who are absolutely honest and sincere about it. It is as funny as it's pathetic to see how the people long to console "Louise of the Saxons"; and to read all the good advice and offers of mediation between her and the King. To me it was especially interesting to observe how in nearly all these artless, badly-spelt compositions, the writers beg and pray that the Princess will never let herself be parted from her youngest child. Some even accuse her of being a heartless mother for so much as thinking of selling her nestling for filthy lucre! The approach of

* Kommerzienrat.

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

Christmas has had a marked influence on the new influx of letters—they are all full of “peace upon earth.” Thus, to-day, the post brought, amongst many harmless greetings, some with serious proposals for reconciliation, which she gave me to read. For instance, an old shop-woman from Dresden wrote an interminable description of her correspondence with the highest circles, telling the Princess that she had seen her sons in the Royal Chapel, and had instantly written to the King, and pointed out to him that, now Christmas was coming, he *must* be unconditionally reconciled to his wife, and let her come home to her children again. And then she went on to explain to him that there was “no real harm in the Princess, but that she had only meant to hoax him a little. It *had* been a little incautious of her, certainly, to show herself so publicly on the *Riviera* with the ‘teacher,’ and, as a matter of fact, she had written to her there, to beg her not to go out

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

walking with him. But, anyhow, the King must overlook this little joke, and now, after this letter, everything would go right, and the family would all be happily united again at Christmas." In conclusion, the worthy lady begged for a suitable situation as companion for her "educated daughter." Whether she added the same request to her letter to the King, she unfortunately didn't say.

Another communication was more comprehensive. It contained a number of closely written sheets.

"Oh! please, dear Frau Kremer," said the Princess, "do be very kind and read this through while Moni is asleep, and tell me to-night what it's all about. I can see that it's a reconciliation-proposal in verse, but—*brrr*—I can't read it through. Do just run over it, so that I may know what the man's talking about."

Well, I actually read it all through! Eight-and-forty cantos, every one with sev-

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

eral verses. It was no light task. The author signs himself *Lumen de Cælo*, and says, in the covering-letter, that he saw the Princess lately in Munich, and there and then made up his mind to help her if he possibly could. Will she then arrange so that the enclosed reconciliation-proposal may reach the Crown Prince? . . . Now we come to the "proposal" itself, which is set forth in grandiloquent ponderous verse, à la Hyronimus Jobs.

The author sometimes addresses the Crown Prince as "Honoured George," and sometimes as "My dear George," and begs him to bring his parents together again, he being the only person who can accomplish this difficult task. But he must proceed very secretly and cautiously, and write three letters, one to the Pope, one to the German, and one to the Austrian, Emperor. He dictates the letters to him; and those to the two monarchs are in verse, while that to the Holy Father is in

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

prose—very, very wordy and irresistibly comic.

I gave the letter back to the Princess.

“Well,” she said, “what does the man want? Have you read it all?”

I gave in my report. The result was, “Into the fire with it!” and the Princess threw the invaluable *Lumen de Cælo* into the crackling flames.

This afternoon, in her boudoir, the Princess began to speak of Haubold again, and told me decisively that she was determined to get rid of her. “She takes too much upon herself, and has a bad influence upon the child, whom she is making dreadfully neurotic. She is so terribly capricious—one moment she is beating Moni, the next simply smothering her with kisses.” She would have gone on, only we were interrupted.

In the evening I was sitting in my room, wrapped in my crimson dressing-gown, and writing, when suddenly the door opened,

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

and in rustled the white silk tea-gown with the silver border! The Princess began again to talk about Haubold, and told me, moreover, to my great satisfaction, that she was delighted with me in every respect, and would entrust the future education of her child to no one but myself.

We chatted for a little while of this, that, and the other, when suddenly the door opened, and in came Haubold. Somewhat impertinently, she rather screamed than said: "Oh, so *here* is Her Imperial Highness! Dear me! I've been looking for Her Imperial Highness all over the house. Who would have expected to find Her Imperial Highness sitting in this room? Rosina is looking for Her Imperial Highness, too; she wants to give in her accounts."

Any other lady would have cut this outbreak short with, "Very well; I am coming immediately." But the Princess blushed violently, jumped up as if she had been

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

caught in a misdemeanour, said a hasty good-night to me, and followed Haubold as meekly as a school-girl. Wonders will never cease!

CHAPTER IX

November 11.

I AM uneasy about Monica. I have often taken her down to my room, and observed—at first with a certain satisfaction—her love for perfumes and scented soaps. When she comes into the room her first rush is to the washstand and toilet-table, where she smells at the soap and the eau-de-cologne flask with delight, until I make her happy by sprinkling her handkerchief and little hands with a few drops of the scent. But her craze for benzine really frightens me. If she can get hold of the benzine-bottle, she sticks her little nose into it with positive ecstasy; and lately when I took it away from her, she flung her arms and legs about me with passionate shrieks, crying that she *must* have the bottle again. I thought it

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

was mere naughtiness, and refused to give it to her. But she was near me to-day while I was cleaning my gloves with benzine, and she picked up every little bit of cotton-wool which I threw away, held it passionately to her nose and mouth, and breathed in the scent so greedily that I hastily took them all away from her; but she managed to get hold of them again.

When I turned round and looked at her, I saw the same expression on her little face as there was that night when she wanted to be stroked to sleep. Her limbs were twitching convulsively, and when I took the cotton-wool away again, she uttered a really piercing shriek.

It is always difficult to calm her. Her nervous temperament is over-developed, and therefore I have begged the Princess not to continue giving her wine at dinner. Wine is sheer poison for a child of scarcely four, especially when she has neurotic tendencies.

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

For my part, I think that the addition of coffee and tea to her milk, no matter in how small a quantity, is unnecessary, if not actually harmful; but the Princess, who has a great opinion of her own medical knowledge, sees no danger in it, and therefore the coffee and tea are to continue. Otherwise the child is well and sensibly fed, and not at all given to sweet-eating. She actually despises cakes. The one thing she occasionally fancies is a piece of milk chocolate.

.

Lately, on the promenade, Moni was spoken to by a distinguished-looking old lady—Lady Paget. She is the widow of an English Ambassador, but is herself of German birth—namely, a Countess von Hohenenthal and Bergen, a close connection of the Saxon Minister's. She belongs to the Princess's circle, though she is not exactly an intimate. Lady Paget is a tall woman,

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

with a fresh, handsome face, and such an elastic, upright bearing, that no one would guess her to be seventy-five.

She has a beautifully-situated and very lovely castle on Bellosguardo, and is considered very eccentric. She likes to have her skirts made so as to show her pretty shoes, which she manufactures entirely herself. She goes in for other eccentricities besides, has hypnotic séances, with her maid as medium; and reigns like a Princess in her charming, comfortable home. She is a noted animal-lover, and has quite a menagerie of dogs, cats, and pigeons.

It was on this subject that she stopped Moni to speak. She is interested in the child, but deplores the fact that her mother has never tried to awaken in her any sense of duty, or any feeling for anybody but herself. Therefore she wants to make the little Princess a present of a dog, and we spent our time to-day in making acquaintance with Moni's future pet. Lady Paget

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

showed her all her animals, but Moni soon got tired of them, and I had some difficulty in inducing her to preserve a semblance of good manners.

The dog, a little Chow, called "Schui," arrived soon after us at the villa, and enlivened (?) the house with his barking, snapping, and whining.

In the afternoon, the Princess begged me to help her again with her 2,000 post-cards. It is quite an entertaining employment. I admire her energy in undertaking it herself. Popularity is no joke; it takes up a lot of time. Prince Bismarck, who also made a point of answering "greetings," made the task a little easier for himself by having a universally applicable phrase, written by his own hand, lithographed in large quantities. To that only the addresses had to be added, and those were *not* written by his own hand. But the Princess does it all herself, as I have described. They are, in a manner of speak-

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

ing, her "hours of meditation"—those in which she writes picture post-cards. To-day, another very funny thing arrived.

"Look here, Frau Kremer," said the Princess, showing me two quires of paper, written over in a woman's hand. "Here's a letter from a schoolmaster's wife in Mähren. She has been so moved by my adventures that she has written a little story about them; and not only that, but she's actually had it printed under the title of 'The Golden Cage.' She begs me to accept her little tale, and so on, and so on. Will you be very good and read the thing out to me, and in the meantime I'll go on writing addresses? We may as well see what it's about."

So I read it out. Good heavens! such sickly sentimentality! Lida, a beautiful bird, lived in splendour and happiness in a golden cage. Lida had five little ones, whom she fed and loved; but then came the decoy-bird. Lida struggled, but was at

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

last overcome by the arts of the seducer. She left her five little ones, and flew away with the betrayer. . . .

It is written in a style of cloying sweetness, which is enough to make one sick. I cleared my throat and stopped. The Princess was writing, with an immovable face, "*Louise*" and "*Heartfelt thanks*," so I went on reading.

"It's simply sickening!" she interrupted at last. I agreed with alacrity, and asked if I should read any more. "Yes, please, if it isn't too much to ask you"; so on I went. The sequel was in the second quire of paper.

"Lida soon grows weary, and sinks half-dead and utterly exhausted on to the branch of a tree. The decoy-bird flies away. Now she thinks of her forsaken little ones, and rues her flight, for freedom has not brought her the dreamed-of happiness. Now she wishes herself back in the golden cage."

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

Such was the brilliant conclusion of this fairy-tale.

“Thank goodness, that’s over!” said the Princess; and she took the papers and flung them into the fire.

But it did not prevent her from writing immediately afterwards a few grateful words to the authoress, who will never know the terrible sentence which had been pronounced on the “Sweet Lida.” By way of a salve to her conscience, the Princess said, while I was blotting the post-card: “If only people wouldn’t write about things they know *nothing* of! A production like that is positively insolent.”

.

After the card-writing to-day, Haubold let off some of her pent-up rage against me. I have already said that she is jealous of every woman whom the Princess seems to like at all, and especially anyone who is superior to herself in education. She never

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

has a good word to say of Miss Zimmern, but always declares she is only making use of the Princess. The real reason of her wrath is that Miss Zimmern once refused to dine with the Princess if Haubold was to be at table.

With the customary *sans gêne* of the household, I believe she actually *had* dined on one such occasion. Moreover, in the old days, Haubold, when she drove out with the Princess, used to sit beside her in the front seat, and Miss Zimmern pointed out that, if only for the sake of appearances, Her Imperial Highness ought to be more ceremonious. So Haubold had to sit on the back seat, and when the Princess first commanded her to do so, she was so furious that she got out of the carriage.

She seems to consider me the rising star, and said to me, very bitterly:

“Why, I believe you’re really more with the Princess than with Monica. Fancy if the Court knew that its chosen governess

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

was stuck in Her Imperial Highness's room all day!"

But she didn't know whom she had to deal with! We had an animated discussion, which ended in her bursting into convulsive sobs, taking back every word she had said, and imploring me to forgive her and her ridiculous jealousy. She was "*too, too* fond of the Princess."

We can't do anything with Schui. He never stops howling and whining. Scolding does no good, and he will have to be taken to a remote part of the house if we are ever to get any sleep at all. If we could only manage to get rid of him, politely, somehow or other!

.

November 11.

To-day I really did go to Church, and the Princess walked with me into town. We went as far as the Church together, and then she betook herself to the Baths. Our

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

way led us down by the Porta Romana, an old Roman gate, where usually stand a number of donkey-carts, and where pedlars and peasants crowd beneath vast green umbrellas, make a great deal of noise, and kick up quantities of dust. The Porta Romana leads straight to the middle of the town.

The Princess was in a confidential mood again, this time about her money-affairs. In spite of the 40,000 marks a year which the Court allows her, she complains of being constantly in difficulties. She is thinking of getting rid of the automobile because it is too expensive. Moreover, she is anxious about the future. If, for any reason, she were to lose her allowance from the Court, she would be simply "*vis-à-vis du rien*," especially as her parents obstinately refuse to give her any support whatever. When, after the Muth-affair, her allowance was stopped for a time, some good friends collected for her 7,000 marks (or *lire*—I don't know which); but these she immedi-

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

ately paid back as soon as her money began to come in again—not without deeply offending her friends, but she can't take presents, she says.

Then she began to talk about Monica's education, and out came the cat from the bag! She wants to dismiss Haubold, and I, instead of remaining in the service of the Court, am to enter *her* service, and bring up the little Princess in Florence.

“Do you not intend, then, to give her up?”

She gave an evasive answer, and overwhelmed me with charming speeches of every kind; but she then appeared to think she had given herself away, and again declared emphatically that she *did* mean to give up Monica. In any case, Haubold would have to go when the child went. She intended, she said, to arrange herself that my position at Court should be permanent, and be made agreeable to me in every possible way; in short, she promised all sorts of fine things, which I know be-

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

forehand that, even with the best intentions, she is not in a position to carry out. But I thanked her and said that, as I had now been with her nearly a fortnight, it was time for me to report myself to the Court, which I had not yet done. She hastily cut me short, and said I needn't do that, for at the Munich meeting she had promised General von Criegern to send a report herself. I did not commit myself in any way, but I made up my own mind to write my own report to the General, which is my clear duty, after all. I shan't make any secret of it, though—I shall show her my letter before I send it.

In the Church, no clergyman made his appearance to read Mass. I waited about an hour! Yet there are any quantity of priests in Florence. It was difficult to feel devotional in such circumstances, and I left for home, meeting little Moni at the Porta Romana. She was coming to meet me, with Haubold and the lady's maid.

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

She literally jumped for joy when she saw me, and proudly took possession of my prayer-book.

The Princess had asked Miss Zimmern to lunch, and I "assisted," by her express desire. I feel more and more attracted by Miss Zimmern's personality—it is so gentle, yet so strong. She seems to be, as it were, the Princess's guardian angel—a true, motherly friend, just what she needs. The only pity is that Miss Zimmern is not quite woman of the world enough for the part. She rarely leaves her studio, and beholds the Princess and her life, so to speak, from on high, thus falling short in that daily knowledge and constant influence which come with perfect intimacy. But any influence she has is, so far as I have seen, entirely for good. I don't believe she has a single one of the *arrière-pensées* which Haubold attributes to her; for Miss Zimmern can hardly be dazzled by a theatre-ticket or two, which is all she

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

ever gets from the Princess, especially as the latter sometimes makes demands upon her which would certainly not be repaid in that way. The two are very different in character, and this probably accounts for their mutual liking, which on the Princess's side is most outspoken, and on Miss Zimmern's somewhat reserved.

This afternoon Her Imperial Highness went out driving with Miss Zimmern, so I had my time to myself, and spent it exclusively in the company of my friend Bucki, who strolled into my room through the window. He sometimes enjoys a successful mouse-hunt here, while I, wrapped in my travelling-rug, sit comfortably ensconced by the blazing fire. When he's tired of the chase, he leaps upon my lap, and purrs and "makes a back," wanting me to stroke him. Then he settles down beside me on the arm of the chair, and my thoughts fly over the Alps and far away, to my dear ones at home.

CHAPTER X

November 12.

THERE is very little difference between Sundays and weekdays at Montauto. We've been busy the whole week with the final arrangement of the things from Salzburg, yet the house still seems empty.

When Signor Payer came to lunch to-day, he couldn't find a place for his hat and stick, and then had to be shown straight into the dining-room, since, as I have said, we don't possess a drawing-room.

Signor Payer, one of the Princess's few masculine acquaintances, is, as his name implies, of German origin, but a regular Italian all the same, who can't speak a word of his own language, though his French is charming, so he and I get on all right together.

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

He is the Director of the Palazzo Pitti Collection. His family was for generations in the service of the Grand Dukes of Tuscany, so for this reason alone he is a devoted friend of the Princess, though since the establishment of the kingdom of Italy, and the consequent transfer of the treasures of the Palazzo Pitti, he no longer represents the Grand Duke of Tuscany, but the King of Italy. I envy him the care of those precious legacies of the Medicean age, the masterpieces of Giovanni da Bologna and Benvenuto Cellini. He is a handsome old gentleman, the father of two grown-up daughters.

Signor Payer said he would undertake to guide us upon an expedition which we had planned for this afternoon to Poggio a Cajano, an old Medicean castle, some miles from Florence. Even Moni was to give up her afternoon sleep and join the party. But we had scarcely left the last houses of Florence behind us, when her little head

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

fell against my shoulder, and, nestled in my arms, she slept soundly until just before our arrival.

The castle stands high above a village of the same name. We entered the park, where there are glorious groups of old trees, and where Maréchal Niel roses flourish luxuriantly, climbing up the terraces which lead to the castle. The castle itself, an old building with a famous sixteenth-century frieze, passed from the hands of the Medici into those of the Grand Dukes of Tuscany. The Princess's own grandfather was very fond of it, and did a great deal towards the laying-out of the grounds. It now belongs to the King of Italy. We didn't go into the castle, but passed through an open colonnade beside it into the huge park which lies behind.

I have never see anything so beautiful as it was in its fresh verdure, with gigantic oak-trees all round it. It seemed to me like a fairy palace—this quiet old place,

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

with its beautifully-kept grounds ; and I could scarcely believe that it was the middle of November, as we stood there in gleaming sunshine amidst the almost spring-like foliage. The illusion was completed by the thousands of marguerites, looking up in crimson glory from the emerald grass. These marguerites are not in the least like the ox-eyes, their pretty sister-flowers which deck our German meadows in spring. The tall Southern beauties voluptuously flaunted their sumptuous star-like blossoms, and in a few minutes we had filled our arms with them.

At the next turning we met the automobile, and then began the most beautiful and interesting part of our excursion—the drive through the immense park, which the former proprietor had laid out in German fashion to please his consort. He wanted it to remind his dear lady of her German home, so here, under Italian skies, flourish all our familiar and beloved native trees.

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

Our kind cicerone, Signor Payer, had arranged for a guide through the labyrinthine paths, so a brown-skinned peasant sat beside the chauffeur, and told him how to go. The extent of the park may be guessed at by the fact that it took us about twenty-five minutes at a good pace to drive right through. I shall never forget that day, for we seemed to pass like lightning from Italy to Germany. There we were—in Italy—driving between meadows in which sheep were grazing, and through avenues of limes and beeches!

“One would think one was just outside Dresden, wouldn’t one?” said the Princess, who evidently divined what I was feeling, and who is herself a great admirer of Saxon scenery.

Then came a charming variety in the shape of numerous little streams, crossed by tall bridges, and then little temples and kiosks, in the taste of the last century, peeping out between trees and bushes.

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

It was already getting dark when we came on to the road again. The sun was setting, and the brilliant blue of the sky was gradually changing—first into violet, and then into a very tender mauve, which got paler and paler, until it was replaced by the most exquisite dim lilacs, greens, yellows, and rose colours.

The distant chain of the Apennines stood out in glorious purple against the magic of that sky. But gradually the colours faded, and soon all was reduced to the faintest azure, while the silver sickle of the moon glimmered out in virginal beauty. Dark cypresses stood like spectres by the roadside; the white walls of the houses reflected the moonlight here and there. . . . As if in a dream, we drove on silently. My thoughts went back to the weeks before I came here, and it seemed so strange that on this fairy-like evening, I should be driving along beside the much-worshipped Princess Louise of Tuscany, with the sleep-

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

ing Monica between us, nestled against my breast! I was almost glad to find we were near Florence, for I felt as if a spell were falling upon me. We drove over the bridge of the Arno, and soon reached the Palazzo Pitti, where Signor Payer left us, and then, on the wings of the wind, through the Porta Romana, up Bellosguardo, and back to the Villa Montauto.

Unforgettable! unforgettable! this unique and beautiful day. Amid all the crowding new impressions, it was, so to speak, the first time that my soul had communed with itself.

.

November 13.

“Oh! my dear little Kremerlein,” said the Princess, when I told her of Schui’s misdeeds. “*Do* help us to get rid of him politely! He doesn’t suit us a bit, and Moni won’t look at him!”

Chance came to our assistance, for in the afternoon Lady Paget’s cook appeared with

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

a note, which said that Schui had been her special pet, and she was most anxious to know how he was getting on. The joy of the rotund little person—a German, by the way—was overwhelming when, with some words of excuse to Lady Paget, we gave her back her beloved Schui. Our own joy was not inferior! And so this little worry ended in general satisfaction.

The Princess is really enchantingly kind to me. What is her purpose? Can she possibly hope to alienate me from the Court? A delusion! I would rather be an emissary from Dresden any day than a dependant of the Countess Montignoso!

I was invited to lunch with Miss Zimmer to-day. The Princess took me there, and then left me alone with her. Our original intention was to do some sight-seeing together, but it was a horrible day, so we stayed at home and talked for hours on the absorbing topic of the Princess and Monica. We hadn't quite finished lunch

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

when Her Imperial Highness suddenly reappeared. She had been downstairs in the *ambulanza*, and had come up to develop a very clever, but most startling, theory upon the connexion between lupus and tuberculosis bacilli. She wouldn't have any lunch, said she must go straight home, but I was to stay here quietly until three or four o'clock, and then get the "skinny Pietrino" to drive me back to Montauto. I have an idea that she specially arranged this interview with Miss Zimmern as a sort of "feeler" for me. Her idea seems to be to proceed somewhat in this fashion:

She will tell the Court that she is very much pleased with me, and is quite willing to entrust me with Monica's future education, *but it must be here in Italy*. Well, the trouble will be to get my consent to that, and I do not intend to give it. Moreover, I told Miss Zimmern quite frankly that in Monica's interests alone I could not undertake the responsibility of her education in

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

Montauto. Germany would be a very different thing.

At the bottom of my heart, I still cherish the hope that the Princess will see for herself how much the best it would be for the child to entrust her permanently to my care; and I *do* rejoice to think that, after a mere fortnight's experience, she has already told me something very like it in so many words. She said so again to-day—said how glad she was that I had just the well-balanced character which she considered essential to her darling's edification, and added that she knew no one else of whom she could say so much. Thus I have no reason to be dissatisfied. But she is so enigmatic! She said also to-day that she only hoped the Dresden Court would grant her request that I should go as soon as possible to the Royal residence with the child. *She* would do everything she could for me, she said, and would see that I was properly rewarded for my trouble.

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

Assuredly that speech does not represent her real point of view. I am more and more convinced that she will try to keep me in Montauto as long as she possibly can, so as to put off the decisive deed to the last moment. She is so full of contradictions that it is utterly impossible to know which is her real intention, and which, so to speak, the decoy-duck of an intention. . . .

The weather remained uncertain, so directly after our coffee I drove up to Montauto, and was immediately packed off again with Moni in the automobile—the Princess wanted to take a little drive into the country with us. We drove along narrow, stony roads, most unpropitious for rubber-tyres, between vineyards and orchards, and whole tracts of vegetables! We passed through several villages. All the women and girls, even all the children, have the same employment in these parts—straw-plaiting. We went nowhere that we did not see them busy at it. I needn't say

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

they all sit in front of their houses, or stand in groups, and gossip unceasingly. It is here that the renowned Tuscan straw-hats are made. I wanted to get a couple for my two girls, and the Princess instantly offered to drive out with me, some day soon, to Scandicci, where she knows a family whose female members are occupied in straw-plaiting; and I might order them there, she says, for by going straight to the fountain-head, I should get them much cheaper than in Florence. . . . Monica went to sleep again in the automobile. When we came back, the Princess, though she had been out all day, left the house again. She is extraordinarily restless; she seems unable to keep quiet for a minute.

.

November 14.

This morning I went with Monica to the Ponte Vecchio, the famous two-piled bridge over the Arno. The lower part is taken up

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

with jewellers' shops, which stand along both sides of the bridge itself, while the top portion is a passage—not a public thoroughfare—leading from the Palazzo Pitti to the Uffizi. Thence we went to the *Cas-cine*, which are the Florentine Hyde Park, Thiergarten (Berlin), or Grosse Garten (Dresden). Here, on the Lung' Arno, one sees the fashionable world of Florence displaying itself in smart carriages. The Princess came with us. From here—it is the spot where Dante first saw his Beatrice—one looks down on all the beauty of Florence. The natural beauty, that is, for one can only enjoy it when one gets away from the Corso and its distractions—all those decked-out, restless people!

We had a delightful time to-day. For about two hours we wandered about in the delicious air; the only thing that spoilt it was the almost unendurable heat. I envied the Princess, who was wearing a thin

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

white linen blouse, while Moni was in her little white sailor-dress.

In the afternoon, we carried out our plan of yesterday, and drove to Scandicci. Poor Moni was again obliged to share the treat, which gave neither her nor me any particular pleasure, as she again took her midday sleep in my arms.

At last we arrived at Scandicci, and an inquisitive crowd gathered round our car as soon as we stopped—chiefly men, who, as everywhere in Italy, lounge about idly all day, and let their wives and children support them by straw-plaiting.

I mustn't forget to mention the inevitable yapping village-curs! I stayed with Monica in the car while the Princess went into the cottage. She soon came out, accompanied by two older women, and we arranged about the size and price of the hats. Then one of the two women brought a tray with wine and cakes from the house, and we had to take some of each. And

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

then a puppy—a cross between a pug, a poodle, and a wire-haired terrier!—was handed into the car. He had once been given to Monica as a present, and had been boarded out here, and now we were supposed to be going to take him back with us. But he brought so much company with him that we hastily hurled him out on the other side of the car, which appeared to be a great relief to him and his!

We certainly hadn't drunk much wine, and therefore there was not the least excuse for our automobile tumbling into the very first ditch! Luckily none of us was injured; only the mudguard was twisted. We got down, but the chauffeur alone could not lift the heavy car out of the ditch, so the Princess rushed back to the village and fetched some lusty peasants, who were soon followed by a considerable crowd of women and children. These stood shrieking and chattering round the scene of disaster; and there was any amount of discussion as to

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

what could possibly be done, so much so that they omitted to do anything, until one of the more intelligent men attacked the business with the chauffeur. The little intermezzo did not last long; we were soon able to set off again, and reached Florence without any further adventures.

CHAPTER XI

November 15.

I HAVE now been here more than a fortnight, and have just written to the Court. I gave them a short description of my arrival, and went on to say that, up to the present, I had got on very well with Monica, and hoped that we would soon become even better friends. I gave the Princess the letter to read, and said that I thought it was only bare courtesy to tell them so much, and that she could send in her report all the same.

The house is hideously uncomfortable again to-day. I do long for some German cosiness! These stone-floors are not to be endured, and the Princess has no notion of making a house homelike.

It's not alone the domestic disorder, but

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

she herself exhales an atmosphere of unrest which affects everyone around her. She's never quiet for a moment. Nothing can keep her still. Her mind, to her, most assuredly, is no kingdom! She can't even sit down and read. The last few days have been really unbearable. Goodness knows what extraordinary ideas she may have got into her head! She is so very adroit, and so incessantly plotting against the Court.

To-day, at breakfast, she spoke to me very openly, complaining of her desperate longing for her children, which sometimes almost drives her mad.

"Something must happen to end the conflict; it's bend or break, now," she said. . . .

It all makes me very anxious. I am so afraid that I may get mixed up with some of her escapades! I hope to goodness it isn't any such wild idea as that of her sudden appearance in Dresden, for instance. She says now, herself, that that occurrence was the result of a momentary impulse.

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

She declares that such an uncontrollable longing for her children seized her, that, in deep mourning and unattended, to avoid recognition, she drove in a *boraccio* all the long weary way from Florence to Pistoria, and thence went on without stopping to Leipzig. On this thirty-hour railway journey she had nothing but a cup of coffee at Milan; and even at Frankfort, where there was a long wait, she took nothing to eat, lest she should be recognized and stopped. The rest of her story is so very different from the notorious facts, that it almost seems to me as if she wasn't above an equivocation.

She can scarcely stay indoors for an hour now. The fit has come over her again. The poor child sees simply nothing of her; indeed, her adoration of Monica seems to me somewhat superficial, when I reflect that all the early part of the day, until lunch-time, she is invisible, as far as that little person is concerned, and that the

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

same remark applies to the afternoon and evening!

I have now had plenty of opportunity of studying her character, and I think that behind her outward charm there lies concealed a crass egotism, coupled with an overweening love of amusement. Very susceptible to flattery, even the coarsest, she has a tremendous opinion of her own good qualities and talents, with both of which she is doubtless richly endowed.

She is very astute, but her cleverness is coupled with an incautious impulsiveness, which is almost incredible, and has the most amazing results. This, and her utter incapability of resistance to any sudden emotion, is largely accountable for her many false steps, and, above all, for her flight from the Saxon Court.

I can't possibly say that her character is a bad one. Her most striking characteristic—apparently, at any rate—is a positively imperturbable good-humour. But her de-

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

cisions often come as suddenly and unaccountably as a bolt from the blue. Once an idea enters her head, it must be acted upon that very moment. This explains the amazing contradictions in her behaviour which confront me daily.

And her opinions are as sudden and irresponsible as her thoughts. A thing will seem a crime to her at one moment, at the next a noble deed. She has a genius for looking at certain things so variously, that black really seems capable of becoming white in her eyes; everything, in fact, appears to her just as it suits her purpose that it should appear.

Sometimes she perceives quite clearly that in her "*affaire*" she is undoubtedly the chief culprit; but as a general rule she represents herself as the victim of an unbearable condition of things. She says at such times that the family-relations in Dresden had made her life a perfect hell and driven her to despair, and that only by

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

means of a scandal was it possible for her to escape from her place of torment. That is the logic with which she consoles herself.

I don't wish to set forth here any theories about heredity, nor to "spread myself" upon the subjects of her uncle, Johann Orth, and her brother, Leopold Wöfling. Nor can I persuade myself to see in her a kind of female "Over-man," a solution which, even in educated circles, is frequently brought forward to excuse her in Germany. In any case, we are not judged by the standard of the "Over-man," but by that of the society in which we are obliged to live.

The only key which I can find to the character and conduct of the Princess is that, in spite of her brilliant gifts, she is psychically, perhaps even morally, defective. Her family has in the last few decades produced some most extraordinary specimens—brilliantly clever, but astoundingly eccentric. The characteristics of the

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

two male members whom I have mentioned (and one which they have in common with the Princess) is a loathing for any kind of class-distinction and etiquette, and a keen desire for purely human relations with their fellow-beings. This it is which has made these three personalities so popular with the great mass of the people; but how far from genuine is this much-paraded conviction one clearly perceives in the case of the Princess, for, whenever it happens to suit her, she lays a tremendous stress upon her position as "Imperial Highness."

The end of Johann Orth was so sudden and so tragic that I will not bring him into comparison; but Leopold Wölfling is a perfect example of the same thing. The Princess herself told me:

"My brother Leopold and I were the greatest friends—we cared more for one another than for any of the rest. I call him Eustachius, and he calls me Eustachia.

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

We write and telegraph to each other nearly every day. Look!" And she showed me a letter she had just got from him, beginning "Dearest Eustachia." He writes a small, delicate hand, like a woman.

"But I can't understand," she continued, "how he can be in love with such a woman. He is such a delightful, clever man! You should just see how commonly she eats, and hear her dreadful way of speaking. Her accent is something terrible. She is a totally uneducated person."

"And is he happy with her?" I asked.

The Princess shrugged.

"It seems so. He gives her lessons, teaches her French, and lately, the piano; but whether it will last is another question. As you know, he is living as a private gentleman near Zürich, going to the University, and is very keen on his studies—especially geology. But here's a curious thing he told me himself. Lately a friend of former days went to see him, and asked

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

the servant-maid if His Imperial Highness was at home. Of course the girl knew nothing about an Imperial Highness. All *she* could say was that Herr Wölfling lived there with his wife. The stranger asked again, rather louder; and my brother, who was standing on the stairs, heard the question, and he told me that he hadn't felt so happy for ages as he did when he heard the dear familiar old title again. So the visitor, whom otherwise he didn't particularly care about, was received with great cordiality. Don't you think it was curious?"

I certainly did. Just like the Princess herself with *her* "Imperial Highness"-ing. . . .

"I laughed, I can tell you," she went on, "when I saw him lately as I passed through Zürich. He came to the station to meet me. I looked for him everywhere, and couldn't see him at all. Then somebody exclaimed, 'Eustachia!' Good heavens! it

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

was he! *My* brother—that man with the long beard and long hair, and never a hat on his head! I scarcely recognized him; he looked like one of the Apostles. He goes in for the ‘simple life’ nowadays. Well, I wonder how long it will last? Nothing but a phase, I’m certain; he’ll go back to the old life again some day.”

Wölfling undoubtedly had a tremendous influence upon the Princess, and she has long since regretted her foolish flight, I am sure. What must it be to her to think “I might have been Queen!”—to her, with her frankly aristocratic ways and tastes, whatever she may choose to pose for in the way of democratic *sans gêne*! A normal woman would probably be tortured by such thoughts, but Louise’s light way of looking at things—that superficiality which is at once a blessing and a curse to her—enables her to be gay and cheerful, and to amuse herself fairly well, despite her supposed misfortunes and tragedies.

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

But the earliest and most enduring influence upon her development was that of Johann Orth. She always speaks of him with a certain emotion, and calls him—the one-time Prince Johann of Tuscany—by the pet name of “Uncle Schani.” She knew him first when she was a fifteen-year-old girl in Vienna. The Court atmosphere there was as distasteful to her as the Dresden one proved later on, and she used to express herself about it with much frankness, and make great fun of the various Archdukes. But her Uncle Schani was “a splendid fellow.” She fell in love with him, and he asked her to marry him; but she refused on account of the near relationship, and said: “Uncle, do you want *us* to bring unsound children into the world?” His influence grew and grew, nevertheless.

She is a good example of Lombroso's theory of genius and insanity; the Decadents, too, would be deeply interested in her. On one side, a quite unusual intel-

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

ligence; on the other, a total want of will-power, no self-control whatever, joined to an extraordinary tendency to intrigue, though never malicious intrigue. It is always the enjoyment of a prank, a trick, never any kind of ill-feeling, and the many things she has told me of her early life and conduct confirm this diagnosis.

On the other side, her distinguishing traits are her great good-nature and her sympathy, which display themselves in her passion for doing good, especially to the sick and suffering. She looks like an angel of light in her phantasmal garments, when she is soothing and kissing her patients, and comforting them with warm, kind words. While she is actually doing these things, she is for the moment absolutely sincere in her kindness; but that does not prevent her from feeling desperately pleased with herself afterwards, and remembering it all most sentimentally, so that one gets an impression of theatricality.

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

Moreover, she thinks nothing of kissing and caressing a person one minute and saying the sweetest things to him, and the next abusing him and turning him into utter ridicule. She is a bundle of contradictions, and he would be indeed a goose who regarded her pretty speeches and heartfelt promises as anything but the expression of a moment's mood.

This very day I have had a fresh proof of the truth of my diagnosis. Just now, in her excitement, she declared that it was the greatest brutality to want to take Monica away from her. "She would proclaim it to the whole world if they deprived her of her child. She would have no house nor home; she would rush all over the globe in her automobile. . . ." And a minute afterwards she was explaining that *these* were her conditions to the Court: she would not relinquish Monica unless they gave her a castle in Germany—Sybille-nort, in point of fact—and a suitable allow-

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

ance; and she would insist on seeing all her children there at regular intervals.

.

November 16.

The good hours here seem to be over. I am already counting the days until I get back to Germany—whether with or without Monica is the grand question. In the meantime we spend our time in driving, walking, and writing post-cards. This morning we three were in the Cascine, and met the two Peruzzi men—brothers and Marquises! The other day they gave Monica a stuffed bear, which enraptured her. One of the brothers is about twenty-one, the other twenty-three, and they are among the Princess's intimates. We have often met them in the street. They are charming young fellows, the last scions of the great house of Medici. Their mother is an American, so they are "English-looking," and prefer to talk English—at any

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

rate, they talk it with the Princess. She does not receive them at Montauto, but sometimes visits their mother. Of course, this friendship has given rise to any quantity of gossip, for everybody believes the very worst of the Princess on the smallest provocation. But one could not degrade one's self by writing down the abominable things that are said about her in certain circles. *She* doesn't care a bit—the best possible attitude! The scandals here are largely attributable to a book which has had an enormous sale on the Continent and in England and America, called “The Confessions of a Princess”*—a *roman à clef*, of which she was said to be the author. The Princess read this book, which I need not say she entirely denies having written; but she thinks it must have been put together by some discharged lackey or lady's maid, for it does display a certain knowledge of the *milieu* and of various things

* *Bekenntnisse einer Prinzessin.*

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

connected with herself, which could only be known through the indiscretions of initiates.

.

November 17.

Almost every day now we drive to the Anglo-American Stores, for Moni to try on little coats and hats; then we go regularly to a garage, to look at automobiles. Quite lately the Princess confided to me that her car was too expensive, and that she would have to get rid of it, and now we look at bigger ones every day; so her small one, instead of being too expensive, was apparently not expensive enough! She is bargaining now for a gorgeous big green one, to cost 50,000 *lire*. She wants to exchange hers against it. Whenever I am with Moni in the garage, she always drags me into the repairing rooms.

“Come and let us look at the little sick automobiles.” Evidently she regards it as a hospital.

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

The Princess heard from the proprietor that the Count of Turin would like to buy her car, but there are difficulties about the transaction.

She does not wish the Count to come to the villa, so she unfolded to me the following plan:

“I’ve thought it out, Frau Kremer. You will drive with me to the Cascine, or, better still, we’ll take Monili too, and meet him there—on neutral ground, as it were. I know that he has wanted to make my acquaintance for ever so long. N——, who was at one time his mistress, has told me so frequently. She added that he ‘deeply respected’ me. . . . I had a sort of idea that N—— was to be the go-between. You must know that here all men consider me a sort of free-lance, everybody’s game—a shameless creature like me! I can’t prevent that, but this one shall see that he’s mistaken, at any rate. He shan’t enter my house. He can buy my car if he likes,

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

but we'll arrange it as I say, and you *must* come with me. The Count, by-the-bye, is immensely handsome, and a great success with women."

The last remark was for my benefit! Whenever she thinks a subject at all embarrassing, it's a favourite trick of hers to break off with a joke like that.

But nothing came of the Count and the car and the Cascine, for the Princess changed her mind, and decided to keep her automobile.

CHAPTER XII

November 18, Sunday.

AT Mass in the morning. Signor Payer came to lunch, and the Princess drove him home herself in the automobile, returning at once. We spent the afternoon over the post-cards, and have got into the second thousand.

The Princess delights in getting me to talk about Dresden. I frequently saw her there, and noticed her very particularly. Once I saw her at the Court Theatre—it was at a performance of “Samson and Delilah”—and I was able to describe her dress, when she asked me, so minutely, that she jumped up in huge excitement, crying: “Yes, yes! That’s exactly what I had on!” I remembered that she was wearing a magnificent pair of diamond ear-

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

rings, and said I wondered why she never wore any but pearl ones now. I had never yet seen those splendid diamonds since I came.

“Oh, I have them still,” she said. “There’s a long story about them. . . . When I was quite a young girl, I was never allowed to wear ear-rings at all, and I simply longed to. But when I asked my father to let me, he replied that he’d as soon see me with a ring in my nose. Then, when I was a bride, I thought I should have my wish at last; but my husband disliked ear-rings, too; so I said: ‘Will you promise me a pair after I’ve had three babies?’ He consented to that. But—man proposes! After several months of married life, there wasn’t any sign of one baby, not to speak of three and the diamond ear-rings, and my father-in-law (then Prince George), who was very anxious about the succession, suggested that we should make a pilgrimage to Mariaschein.

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

Well, we made our pilgrimage, confessed, and communicated, and with excellent results—so excellent, indeed, that, as a baby began to arrive every year, I finally said to my father-in-law: ‘Papa, what do you say to another pilgrimage to Mariaschein? We might ask to stop the babies for a while.’ ”

The point was, however, that soon after the birth of the third little Prince, the mother claimed the fulfilment of her husband’s promise. He couldn’t refuse, and as soon as she could go out she went to the Court jeweller, Rösner, got the ear-rings, and had her ears pierced. But old Rösner was so excited that his hand shook, and he pierced too deeply. It hurt her dreadfully, but she wouldn’t be prevented from going to the theatre that evening with the new ear-rings on; and so she sat there the whole evening with aching ears, but so delighted with her triumph that he bore the pain heroically to the end.

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

November 19.

The weather has broken. It's almost as cold out-of-doors as in. Fires are burning everywhere, but nothing can warm this house. We had a storm this morning—the herald of winter. Yet the Princess can't stay within four walls, and as there happened to be nothing on the calendar, she suggested that she should take me to the Palazzo Pitti. Signor Payer acted as cicerone. Unfortunately, the Princess is very active, so it was a kind of "Ride of the Valkyries" through the long succession of rooms—a horror, instead of the anticipated joy. Truly, one would need to possess iron nerves, or else a most phlegmatic temperament, not to break down more or less beneath this torture; but it has never been so bad as these last few days.

.

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

November 20.

Moni and her mother went out to lunch to-day with some English friends, and as I was free, it was arranged for me to go to the Palazzo Vecchio with Miss Zimmern. How different it all was with this gentle lady—such a contrast, in her genuine sweetness and dignity, to the Princess! But she added to my worries by telling me that she, too, had noticed what an excited state the Princess was in. She tells me Her Imperial Highness now declares that she has hit upon a perfectly splendid plan which will force the Court to accept her conditions (I believe she has a long list of them); but she absolutely refused to let Miss Zimmern know what the plan was. She usually tells her everything, but at present she confines herself to stating mysteriously that “it is splendidly thought out.”

Miss Zimmern thinks that it must be

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

some perfectly monstrous piece of folly, since she was afraid to confide it to her, and is very anxious to know if I have gathered any idea of it. Unfortunately, I could give her no information, and haven't even succeeded in having a word with the Princess to-day, for she went off this evening *en grande toilette*—"a party at another old married couple's, where it would be frightfully boring!"

.

November 21.

To-day is the anniversary of the Princess's wedding-day. Perhaps that was what made her so talkative. She told me a lot about her early life, about her husband, about her children. She is firmly convinced that she would long since have been reconciled with her husband, and that all would have been well, if she had only had to do with him alone, or had even had one interview with him. But how could

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

she possibly have got at him, considering that every step he took was spied upon by a set of people whom she hated and loathed from the bottom of her heart? But if she *could* only talk to him alone, and tell him everything, and say she was sorry, she was perfectly certain that everything would be all right again.

“Perhaps when you’re with Moni in some castle near Dresden, you could manage a surprise-meeting between me and the King in the park? No man could ever resist a woman whom he has loved as he loved me, and I should know just how to win him back again.”

Is *that* the cat coming out of the bag? Does the mysterious plan resolve itself into an attack upon the King? And does she think she’s going to be able to use me for such a purpose? It’s not such a bad idea, but there’s one flaw in it—I am not inclined to help. So I listened quite coolly while she talked on persuasively, and said that

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

we'd go together—that was, she and I, not even Monica—to Munich early in December, and there she would give Countess Fugger her list of conditions; and Countess Fugger should then go with me to Dresden and lay them personally before the Court, and I was to be a witness on her side, so to speak.

I did not say anything about the judiciousness of this proceeding, but merely asked, in some surprise, if she really did not intend to relinquish Monica.

“Of course, of *course*, she was ready to relinquish Monica, but not until her conditions had been accepted. . . .” Another instance of her utter egotism. Not for the child's sake, not to rescue her from her ambiguous position, is she ready to give her up, but merely as the price of her precious conditions.

.

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

November 22.

The Princess has a new diversion, a new craze—shoemaking. She was inspired to this by Lady Paget, who, as I have already said, makes all her own boots. Yesterday arrived Scipio, her excellent old servant-man, and drove into town with the Princess in the automobile, to show her the shops where she can buy leather, lasts, cobbler's wax, and other essentials. To-day a lady came to give the first lesson, and the Princess was enchanted with the new game. She has already made half a shoe, and even at table she never stopped hammering at the soles. Hedwig is to have the very first pair of home-made shoes, and is fervently hoping that the second shoe may soon be ready. I imagine that she will have to wait a long time for it!

In the afternoon we wrote post-cards again. We are well into the second thousand now. In to-day's delivery I came

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

across a letter, in the Princess's handwriting, which came from Dresden! I didn't conceal from her my astonishment that she should write letters to herself from Dresden. She said, rather confusedly, that it wasn't her handwriting—the "f's" were quite different. Nearer inspection proved this to be true, but otherwise the handwriting resembles hers to a dot.

Not only does it slope in the same direction, but its small peculiarities are identical. Its real author is a certain Bergmann, a tooth-powder maker in Potschappel, near Dresden; and, as I gradually found out, the leading spirit of the "Louise-party" in Saxony. Whether he originally wrote like this I can't say, but it seems to me quite impossible that two people, entirely unconnected with one another, should write almost identically the same. *I* should think that Bergmann had systematically studied every tiniest feature of the Princess's writing, and then imitated it. It

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

seems to me all the more probable now that I know it was he who painted that wonderful cup of hers, which is red and gold on the outside, and has inside a so-called "Watteau"-picture of a nymph bathing. The Princess invariably uses this cup for her coffee and tea. It is taken out of a pretty case to be used, then washed by Gioconda in the room under its owner's eyes, and then carefully put back in the case.

Bergmann was originally a painter on porcelain, who might be expected to have an eye for outline; and is, as I've said before, the head of the so-called "Band of Friends," a society which boasts of having branches all over Germany, and whose object is to conduct the Princess Louise's affairs in Saxony. The fanaticism of these people must be enormous; they shrink from no expense, and Bergmann has already managed to secure an audience with the Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria,

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

through the mediation of a Frau Schratt, but without any particular result.

In the evening the Princess went to the theatre. Zacconi is there with his company, and she gave me a very sensitive and enthusiastic description of his Oswald in Ibsen's "Ghosts." She always takes two front stalls, and is usually accompanied by Miss Zimmern, but sometimes by a lady-doctor, a Miss Harris, or else by a singer, Signora Baracchia. Dr. Harris is an American from San Francisco. She lost all her property in the earthquake, and now lives permanently in Florence. Signora Baracchia is also an American by birth. She has a magnificent voice, and sometimes gives the Princess singing lessons.

.

November 23.

These last few days we all seem to have purposely avoided the subject of the giv-

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

ing-up of Monica. . . . It's very, very hot again to-day, as we noticed on our walk. Lately the Princess has often come with us, and so she did to-day. Monica is not particularly delighted by this condescension. To-day she was very naughty, and wouldn't run on in front. Her mother lets her tyrannize over her quite cheerfully. But as she wanted to walk herself instead of driving, she carried Monica "pig-a-back," in spite of all objections from me or anyone else. When we came home Torrello was there with his *boraccio*, and as soon as he unharnessed the donkey and let Monica ride, the little imp forgot all about being tired. On days like this one is almost afraid to go into the house; it is like going from a sun-bath into an ice-cellar. That is rather an exaggerated way of putting it, but the Princess never speaks except in hyperbole, and so one falls oneself into the habit.

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

November 24.

The climate will certainly get no praise from me just now. I suppose I must have caught cold yesterday in the "ice-cellar," for I am ill to-day, and have had a fainting-fit. The Princess is exquisite; she is as anxious about me as if I were her own child—makes tea for me herself, takes me in her arms, kisses me on the forehead, and pets me generally. She brought Monica down to me, too, but Monica took it very coolly, and merely gave me her "handie." It's rather dreadful to have to be alone for the greater part of the day, with all my anxieties! On the other hand, however, the rest is doing me a lot of good, after all these worrying days, and so I'm not very sorry to be laid up.

.

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

November 25.

Dr. Kreyl has examined me, and says that I am suffering from cold and nervous collapse, a diagnosis which I had already made for myself. I am to stay in the house for a few days, and in the meantime the Princess is going to drive to Scandicci and fetch the hats. She is to be accompanied on this drive—a very unusual arrangement—by Signor Giollini and his wife. . . . Now that I am ill, I find the change in the weather very trying. Dr. Kreyl tells me that I must sit out in the sun as long as there is any. And now I am back in my room again. In spite of the blazing—and, alas! smoking—fire, I cannot get warm. . . . I was interested in Dr. Kreyl's personality: the Princess made him stay to lunch. He is a pale, dark man, somewhat awkward in manner, of about twenty-eight, a Swabian from lovely Stuttgart. I think I have mentioned that

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

he is the head-surgeon—together with Dr. Banzetti—at the *ambulanza*. When the Princess broke her leg last spring, he tended her devotedly, and she cannot praise him enough. But his great distinction in Florence is the story of his marriage to an English girl. This lady, beautiful and gifted, is a painter of considerable talent, and she only consented to go with him to the Registrar upon certain written conditions, which she carried in a portfolio under her arm. The principal one was that theirs was to be a “purely spiritual” marriage. She put her theory into practice directly, for as soon as the ceremony was over she went off by herself to Rome, and has been there now for some weeks.

.

November 26.

The Princess has altered her “plan” once more. She still sticks to the idea of going with me and her maid to Munich in

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

the beginning of December. There she still means to stay with her friend, Countess Fugger; but I am now to go on alone to Dresden, and confer with the Court. She will recommend me most cordially to the authorities there, and all she means to ask of them at first is to leave the little Princess with her till the spring. Then I am to come back to Florence and fetch her, "as I won't stay with her all the time." I am, above all things, to bear witness in Dresden that the change to the raw northerly climate would be most dangerous to the child at this time of year.

I said that that was quite true, but she must have known it all along. Of course it's all a feint, and I have been sadly cheated of my hopes. The Princess has no intention of relinquishing the child; all her policy is directed simply to putting off the decisive moment. Only she doesn't quite know how to manage it. Moreover, I am convinced that the innumerable and daily

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

increasing reports from “Louisa-maniacs” (however she may laugh at them) are influencing her deeply; and I look forward to December 1—only a few days off now—with much secret anxiety. She is nicer than ever to me, saying that she envies me the reunion with my children, and our Christmas together. I am quick enough to draw my own conclusions—and I have begun to prepare for my departure. The Princess helped me with visible satisfaction in my search for interesting souvenirs of Florence, and incessantly expressed her readiness to help me and mine in every possible way. She is “praising me off the premises”! But what is the reason of her restlessness and nervousness—so great that she can hardly endure to be at Montauto for an hour at a time? . . .

When I was sitting in the sun to-day, she passed me and put the *Tag* on my knee, saying, “Just read that. It’s quite interesting to-day.”

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

The "interesting" part was the announcement of Giron's marriage! She said nothing more about it—indeed, she seemed a good deal livelier even than usual. The news troubled her as little as the anything but flattering remarks about herself which accompanied it.

.

November 27.

To-day I resumed my accustomed walk with Moni for the first time since my illness. We went down Bellosguardo to the Porta Romana, crossed the tramway lines, and turned into the broad walk on the left, which is called the Viale dei Colli. Handsome wide paths, bordered with trees, lead gently up the hill. We then went into the Boboli Gardens, which run along to the right, about half-way up; and Moni was enchanted with the gold-fish swimming round and round in the basins. There are beautiful flower-beds, magnificent groups

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

of trees, and clumps of ornamental shrubs. The gardens climb right up the hill, but we stayed below with the gold-fish and the fountains, and rested on a bench. Monica picked up acorns and played with them. The view of Florence from here is marvellous. At midday three guns went off, and we went back to lunch.

At table Moni was again dreadfully naughty. She never has much of an appetite, but to-day she would scarcely touch a morsel. She kicked her legs about, scratched the tablecloth with her nails as far as she could reach, and made the most hideous faces. The Princess was sitting opposite, and was hugely amused by her pranks, so that it was utterly impossible for me to get Monica into any sort of order, no matter what I said. My pleading glances—it would only have needed a word from her to set all right—were totally unheeded. At last I laid down my spoon, and said to the Princess: “If I might sug-

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

gest something, Your Imperial Highness, it would be that we should send for a doctor. I can hardly believe that these convulsive movements of Moni's are mere naughtiness. I consider them symptomatic—unless the child has St. Vitus's dance!"

The Princess got perfectly crimson, and called Moni to order—she was now busily engaged in disposing of a large mouthful of dinner with the help of a great deal too big a draught of water. As I have already remarked, a governess at Montauto really doesn't know where to begin!

CHAPTER XIII

November 28.

TO-DAY the canary-bird, whose arrival was announced more than a fortnight ago, came at last from Miessen. It was intended as a present for Monica, and was in great spirits when it reached us, despite the long, cold transit. The giver was a "Louisamaniac." He had not neglected to provide it with a pretty brass cage, decorated with gay painted glass, a little bath, and the necessary food; indeed, there was actually a stand to hang the cage on! Moni was much delighted with the tiny creature, which seemed to be very tame, and Hedwig soon had everything in order—sand upon the floor, water and seeds in the little bowls, and the cage—for the Princess thought the stand hideous—comfortably

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

arranged upon a table in the nursery. Here the canary from Miessen is to take up his permanent abode. Even this first day he began to sing so enthusiastically that the Princess could hear him in the next room. She was not overjoyed, for she can't bear canaries, and in the afternoon she cried:

"Hede, take the bird away, or I shall go crazy!" To me she said, as we were working at the post-cards: "I can't bear canaries; their singing and piping gets on my nerves and drives me half distracted. Oh, I *can't* stand this! . . . Hede, I beseech you to take the bird away. Carry it upstairs. The noise is unendurable!"

"But, Your Imperial Highness," answered Haubold, "the child loves it so! Do let her have it here. We'll shut the door, then it won't be so noisy."

With that she went out and shut the door.

"If the bird doesn't go upstairs, *I* will!" the Princess called after her.

Then she explained to me that the sing-

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

ing reminded her of a bird they had had at home, which she couldn't bear either, for he made such a dreadful racket the whole day long.

But all the same Haubold did *not* take the bird away, nor did the Princess go upstairs!

Moni is better pleased with the little creature; she brings him lumps of sugar, and looks to see that he has seeds and water, but just now I caught her taking his sugar away from him and eating it herself!*

.

November 28.

When I was going upstairs this morning, I saw the Princess, in her nursing-dress, disappearing round a corner, and heard

*I gave myself the pleasure, on my return to Dresden, of looking up the canary-giver at Miessen. The honest fellow was delighted to hear of the reception which the little Princess had given his present, and then said, smiling: "Oh yes! and I gave one to the King too!" And when I looked at him in amazement, he added: "You may say I am Canary Provider to the Court, mayn't you?"

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

that Rosina, the cook, had been taken very ill at five o'clock—so bad that they had awakened the Princess, who gave her “first aid,” and then telephoned to the doctor, and was now busy with her again. At eight o'clock Dr. Kreyll arrived, and she told me laughingly soon afterwards that she had been there during the examination, and that everything was now arranged. Rosina was to stay in bed for a day or two, take great care of herself, eat well and be well-nourished, and would soon be all right again. So the Princess is in her element! She can turn herself into a nurse, and the house into a hospital. Immeasurably kind and solicitous as she was to me during *my* little attack, her goodness to Rosina baffles all description. A temporary cook was instantly procured, and told that her chief care was to be—Rosina! The net result is that one mostly finds the whole kitchen emptied, so to speak, into Rosina's room. The taking-in of her dinner is a sort of

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

processional march. First comes Severina, who opens the doors; Gioconda follows with the dinner-tray; and last of all—the Flag-Lieutenant, as it were!—comes the portly “temporary,” whose only duty, apparently, is to be present. They stalk solemnly, one after the other, like a flock of geese—only they’re too intensely grave even for that!—through the dining-room several times a day on their way to the sick-chamber. . . . To crown all, the Princess herself settles the convalescent in a cosy arm-chair in her own room, wraps her in her own best rugs, strokes her, tucks her in, watches over her sleep, gives her her medicine—floating in a veritable heaven of altruism!

.

November 30.

To-day, as Fate would have it, the chauffeur too fell desperately ill. High temperature, inflamed throat. The Princess was

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

as pleased as a newly-established young doctor—yet another patient! She divided herself nobly between Rosina and Lagler, as, unfortunately, she could not well establish the two in her bed-room. And we heard by telephone that Miss Zimmern also had been ill these last few days. Doubtless, the Princess would have nursed her indefatigably also, if her own Home-Hospital had not taken up all her time.

.

December 1.

To-day my time of probation is over, and I don't yet know what is going to happen. Nothing can be done till I hear from the Court. The Princess telegraphed early to Dresden, "Report follows." But she's going to take her time about it, she tells me, so it won't go off to-day. She told me at morning coffee what she was going to say to the Ministry: "That I am to her the most sympathetic of personalities, and that

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

she would like to entrust her child's future education to me. But the time of year is unsuitable for giving her up; she therefore begs the King to leave the little one with her until the coming spring. She would further desire, before Monica goes to Dresden, to make her acquainted with her two little sisters.'

She proposes now again to send Countess Fugger with me to the Court, so that she may negotiate there some further much-desired arrangements. She has already wired to the Countess to come to Florence—greatly to my surprise, I must say. Hitherto the talk has merely been of the Princess coming with me to Munich, and thence despatching the Countess to Dresden. So here's yet another change! I don't doubt that this plan, too, will be eventually thrown overboard. But, at any rate, we must wait until we hear from the Court. That won't be for a fortnight, of course. I must reckon on that much waiting before

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

I can depart, either with or without Monica—without her, I now feel perfectly sure! Thus, all we can do for the next few days is to possess our souls in patience. I long for home all the more, because since the end of November it has been so horribly cold. The *tramontana* blows now and then. Directly I enter my room in the afternoon, I have to light the fire in the stove—which is always ready laid—and even then I can hardly bear it, and have to sit wrapped in rugs before the blazing fire.

The Princess has arranged an automobile trip to Pisa for to-morrow, but to judge by the strangely white, ring-shaped clouds, we are likely to have the *tramontana* to-morrow, which will knock the automobile trip on the head.

On these cold days little Moni's fencing costume comes in very useful for her. It is like a boy's suit in black velvet. She wears long black stockings and patent-leather shoes with it, and round her waist a black

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

· silk sash with fringed ends. She looks so like a little boy that we call her "Schani."

"Schani" has a little Highland dress, too, and loves to dance and leap about in the dining-room with me in it, while the Princess plays a Highland Schottische. On such occasions we often get other music also, and sometimes a song or two, but never anything but drawing-room ballads. She played a *Lied* lately, and then asked me if I knew it.

I answered promptly: "Yes; it's a *Lied* by Koschat. I can't remember the name at this moment."

"You're wrong," said the Princess proudly; "it's a composition of my own."

She sometimes takes a fit, when she has asked people here, of fetching them herself in the automobile. She did so this evening, when she had a little party, at which she had invited me to be present. Signora Barrachia wanted to bring a young piano-forte virtuoso named Toselli. In full even-

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

ing-dress, very *décolletée*, with only a fur cape over her shoulders, and white satin shoes on her feet, the Princess set off in the automobile about eight o'clock and collected her guests, who also included Miss Harris, the lady-doctor. As I had a headache, I didn't assist, and only heard from the nursery a few songs from Barrachia, and then the brilliant playing of the young Italian virtuoso.

The Princess hasn't yet written to the Court.

.

December 2.

The Princess has been making out her monthly accounts, and finds the automobile is too expensive, so she's going to give it up altogether. The plan of changing it for a larger one has been abandoned, as I expected. Now she's worried at the idea of dismissing the chauffeur. The automobile is to be taken to the garage in town,

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

and the proprietor will try to dispose of it. That was all arranged this morning, as I thought.

She came in to lunch very excited, saying that she couldn't eat anything (which didn't prevent her from displaying an excellent appetite). The reason of her vexation was that she had been told in town that her automobile had been seen late at night, when she was at a party or the theatre, in a notorious street, where the chaffeur had taken up a powdered and painted cargo, and gone for a drive with them in the Cascine Gardens. Of course, this is frightfully injurious to the Princess; but what is she to do? One would suppose, to send the automobile instantly to the garage to be sold, and dismiss the chauffeur without delay! *I* said that she ought to tell him the reason straight out.

"Oh, good heavens, no!" she cried; "that would never do."

And Haubold also asseverated that it

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

was out of the question to speak to him of such a thing.

So everything is to remain as it is until January 1! And she “doesn’t believe the chauffeur’s so bad—probably it’s nothing but talk!”

She hasn’t written to Dresden to-day either.

.

December 3.

To-day Duse visits her native Florence with her company, and the Princess, to my great delight, has asked me to go with her to the Pergola-Theatre. They are playing *Gioconda*, by Gabriele d’Annunzio, the play which was written expressly for his one-time *amie*. As the scene is laid in Florence, the piece is always received here with much enthusiasm. The curtain rises on the well-known view from the Viale dei Colli. Although I know very little Italian, I was able to follow the piece tolerably well—

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

thanks to Duse's expressive acting. The Princess, moreover, was a good interpreter. The play itself is weak. There are only a few really enthralling scenes, but it gives the Duse an opportunity—and that is its principal purpose—of displaying her wonderful method, together with her expressive hands, her soulful eyes, and last, not least, her exquisitely artistic dresses.

What struck me most, on the whole, after the beauty of her voice, was the amazingly natural gesture and movement, the great *truthfulness* of her acting. She, of course, was the absorbing figure. Even in the last act (which is very weak, and even superfluous), when both her hands have been shattered by the fall of the statue, and she speechlessly holds them out, she showed the most marvellous art. She was called before the curtain again and again—it must have been quite a dozen times—and as we were quite close, I could see her so well that her face is fixed on my memory for ever.

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

In the intervals, the Princess pointed out to me various Florentine notabilities. She gave me very piquant and interesting details about some of them—for instance, the Marquis S——, who was sitting in one of the stage-boxes, and whose money-affairs are in such a precarious condition that he has already been obliged to sell his ancestral palace. He had the bad taste to say in one of the clubs, when the Princess came to Florence, “that in six months she would be his mistress.”

“Well,” said she, rubbing her hands, “I’ve been here two years, and I’m not yet!”

In one of the boxes on the first tier, close beside us, there were sitting quite a dozen fast-looking men, who all had their glasses levelled on the Princess. When it became too insulting, she shrugged her shoulders (which were actually covered, for once in a way), and said:

“Bah! they’re like a lot of monkeys in a cage. It’s simply sickening.”

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

I also saw a great many Florentine beauties in gorgeous array. They seem all to be distinguished by pale complexions, Titianesque fair or chestnut hair, hooked noses, and fine figures. Some slender blonde Englishwomen seemed to attract most of the attention of the *jeunesse dorée*; and truly I have seldom seen more beautiful representatives of Old England than upon that evening in the Pergola.

The English colony in Florence is very considerable, and fills no less than five Anglican churches. . . . The Princess's letter to Dresden hasn't gone *yet*!

.

December 4.

To-day the Princess has written to Dresden—only to-day! She read me out the extraordinarily comprehensive document, whose contents I practically knew beforehand. I was struck with the fact that she says, as a further reason for her refusal to

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

send Monica with me, that the little Princess ought to have more time in which to grow accustomed to her future governess. What logic! Daily and hourly she holds forth to me on the subject of my joy in seeing my children again; and she has told me more than a dozen times that I must be a very unnatural mother if I'm not simply longing to be with my dear little girls. And now the idea is that Monica must have a still longer time to get accustomed to me. Good heavens! Where, and when! While I'm with my "dear little girls"? It sounds somewhat more plausible when she says that she sees how impossible it must be for me to give my undivided love and devotion to *her* darling while I am so far away from my own children.

It was for this ostensible reason that, in the middle of November, she wanted to move heaven and earth for me to go at once with Moni to Dresden. But she's forgotten all about that! She knows now

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

that I am not inclined to stay longer in Florence, and she knows, too, quite well, that even if the Court granted her request to leave me here longer, it would do no good at all, because it is *I* who refuse to stay. So she evidently must be playing me false in some way.

With this idea in my head, I requested her to-day to give me directions for my return journey. We fixed December 19 or 20 for my departure.

Probably the decision upon to-day's letter will be delayed until the middle of December, for there must first be a Privy Council, and then the report to the King. But if the Court agrees to the new proposals, it would only take a day to settle it all. One trouble is certainly that I get my traveling-expenses through the Court; but that doesn't really much matter, for *she* will advance it if necessary, so anxious is she to see the last of me.

And so to-day the situation is clear. I

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

have failed in my mission. Now the only thing left is to make a dignified departure. I do not feel that there was one single moment in which I could have acted otherwise than as I did, or that, following the instructions given me, I could have altered the result in the slightest degree.

The end of the suspense, however, has calmed us all down, and this applies particularly to the relations between the Princess and Haubold, which have been rather strained for the last fortnight. Although, after that evening upon which she was turned out of my room in such a remarkable manner by the young woman, the Princess has never said a word against her to *me*, she has been somewhat snubbing to Haubold herself.

They drove into town together to-day for the first time for ages, and when they came back, Haubold told me that they had spoken to one another very plainly on the way—and ever since she, too, has been

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

amiability itself to me! I suppose that since there is now no doubt about my departure, she no longer regards me as a rival. But my experiences here make me distrust this change also, and I shall be well upon my guard.

.

December 5.

The last *tramontana* has evidently cleared the air, for since then the weather has been delightfully bright and fine. Though the thermometer is sometimes low in the mornings, there is an almost summer-like heat about twelve o'clock. The sky is brilliantly blue, the sun shines brightly, and the trees and shrubs are so fresh and green, that one almost forgets that Christmas is, so to speak, at the door. Roses still bloom in the garden; the red berries of the laurels are splitting open, and showing the seed-capsules, which are even more brilliant in colour; other bushes have gleaming blue

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

berries on them, and we are filling our bowls and vases with laurel and mimosa. It seems as if Nature wanted to wear her gayest and loveliest colours once more before her winter-sleep.

The Princess goes out driving these days; she went to see Lady Paget this afternoon.

.

December 6.

One should never praise the weather, or, at any rate, not without knocking under wood! Yesterday was lovely; to-day is bitterly cold. We are all freezing. Even in bed last night every one was shivering, and so every one gets extra blankets to-day, Monica actually being presented with a Royal marten-skin rug, made from the spoils of the Grand Duke of Tuscany's gun.

As the Countess Fugger is expected immediately, all sorts of arrangements have to be made; and as she and I will have to be for some time together in Montauto, the

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

various changes in the house are taking up a considerable part of the Princess's time.

.

December 7.

To-day, again, we wrote ever so many post-cards to "Louisa-maniacs." Of the original 2,000 birthday cards, there are still 650 to be answered, and a good many have come since.

Although she answers every correspondent without regard to his position or origin, she, nevertheless, draws a very sharp distinction between aristocratic persons and "the mob." She doesn't mean this as badly as it sounds. Some years ago they were very much offended with the Princess George in Dresden, because one day, out driving, she was said to have exclaimed: "What beautiful children the mob has!" In the same way the Princess says: "It's amongst the mob that my greatest admirers and friends are. The mob loves me

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

very much." She always speaks of the lower classes in this way, but she only means it as a contrast to the aristocracy.

On this subject one can only quote Prince Orloffsky: "It's our way"—"*Chacun à son goût.*"

.

December 8.

The Princess had an appointment this afternoon with Signor Toselli. She had invited him for half-past two, and he was to play to her for an hour. She was tremendously excited, and kept rubbing her hands in anticipation of the artistic pleasure—a habit of hers.

But three o'clock came, and Toselli had not yet arrived. The Princess, who was doing the post-cards with me, got quite feverish, talked about impertinence—"What could the young puppy be thinking of?" She called Gioconda, and told her that if Signor Toselli was not here by ten min-

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

utes past three at the latest, she was to say when he did come, "*Altezza*" (as the Italian servants call her) "is not at home."

Gioconda reappeared shortly afterwards and announced "Signor Toselli."

The Princess instantly hurried down to the dining-room, where the piano is, and asked me to come with her. When I had been introduced, I took my place in the background, on one of the divans against the wall, while the Princess sat down beside Toselli at the piano. He *did* occasionally run over the keys, but the "hour's playing" chiefly consisted of a most animated conversation in Italian between him and the Princess, from a little after three o'clock in the afternoon until seven o'clock in the evening! They quite forgot me.

When five o'clock struck, I began to feel tired of doing "gooseberry" by the wall, so I went into the nursery to have tea with Monica. At half-past six, I sent the lamps

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

down. He went at about seven, and the Princess told me radiantly what a delightful talk she had had with him. He had told her all sorts of interesting things about false friends—Fräulein Muth and others.

CHAPTER XIV

December 9.

THE Princess said to me this morning, as we were drinking our coffee, "To-day, alas! is a very sad anniversary for me. Just imagine, my Ernie's tenth birthday, and it's exactly four years this very day since I left Dresden."

Soon afterwards I heard her whistling merrily, and couldn't see the smallest trace of melancholy about her for all the rest of the day.

This afternoon she was going to the Verdi Theatre to see Berlioz's *Damnation of Faust*, and she invited me to accompany her. She spent the time beforehand in paying her return-visit to Toselli—not to him alone, of course, but to his parents, with whom he lives. So we pulled up

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

before their house, and Toselli was ready waiting for us; he opened the door, kissed the Princess's hand, and helped her out. She then told the chauffeur to go on to Miss Zimmern's, and ask the cook to send down the tickets; then he was to take me to the Baptisteria, so that, before my departure, I might see that interesting building—a miniature edition of the Duomo. In about half-an-hour we were to come back for the Princess. So we did, but we had to wait nearly an hour before she appeared, accompanied by Toselli, who took leave of her with another kiss on her hand, while she said, "*A domani!*" (Till to-morrow, then!)

When we arrived at the theatre, the performance had of course long since begun. One doesn't expect much, as a rule, from a Sunday afternoon opera, but it was more interesting than I had thought likely, though I was not mistaken in my idea that the theatre and the audience

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

would prove far from first class. The orchestra, however, was very good, though the conductor afforded us no little amusement. He coquetted with the audience in the most fantastic way—took seductive poses, and generally made an exhibition of himself, without in the least affecting the *ensemble* of the players, who are excellently trained. At the end of each act he hastily disappeared, to come before the curtain hand-in-hand with the singers, and share their applause with them. The opera got more and more grotesque with every act. The drinkers in Auerbach's cellar wore the most amazing dresses; it was like a costume-exhibition, in which Hungarians and *Slowaken* preponderated. The scenery, which was very well painted, shook so ominously that one's illusions shook with it! But the occupants of the cheaper places seemed to be enchanted with everything; loud "encores" demanded the repetition of almost a whole scene

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

sometimes, and this made the performance seem dreadfully long.

The greatest enthusiasm was caused by the Hades-scene, in which a crowd of hideous devils appear, armed with pikes and pitchforks, and sing a chorus. This was wildly encored, and had to be repeated. Such concessions to the public—incredible to us in Germany—are quite usual in Italy; indeed, the singers would be considered almost failures if they did not take place. But the uproar was worst of all after the very feeble dancing-scenes, which no suburban theatre in Germany would venture to present to its patrons. I have never seen anything uglier or more ungraceful than the antics of these ballet-girls, who were otherwise pretty enough. Evidently they have no notion that dancing is an art. Nevertheless, they were clapped and cheered and called before the curtain; and the excitement rose to positive frenzy when some of the dancing elves went up

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

on wires, and the skies were illuminated with coloured lights.

By this time it was seven o'clock, and only two acts had been got through. We had had more than enough, and left before the beginning of the third act. I must confess that the visit to the opera was a bitter disillusion to me. In the country of the *bel canto*, the fatherland of Rossini and Verdi, I had looked for something very different from this music, this performance, this ballet! To think of the Dresden opera by comparison!

.

December 10.

This morning, when Moni and I were taking our walk, we met some Germans — Royal Saxons, indeed, as I could tell by their dialect. They admired the child, whose beauty strikes all observers, and were constrained to inquire of me—whom they recognized as a country-woman—

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

who she was. I answered, not without pride in the announcement, that she was the little Princess Anna Monica Pia of Saxony.

There was no end then to the admiration and the "Oh's!" and "Well, fancy's!" and I was obliged to take leave very hurriedly, or else Moni would have been lynched in the Florentine highways out of pure love!

We told the Princess of the incident, and she was delighted, but couldn't help, all the same, making great fun of it. She loves to crack a joke, and isn't particular about its quality; and yet she has no real sense of humour at all. She knows Wilhelm Busch, for instance, but very superficially, and she could never enjoy him as he ought to be enjoyed.

I tried to interest her in "Rideamus," too, but I soon discovered that she is quite incapable of appreciating him. She scarcely ever reads, to the great grief of

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

Miss Zimmern, who would dearly love to instil into her a love for good literature.

Lately she gave me Zola's *Rome* to read—in the original French, too. After that we often talked of Rome and Roman things, and the Princess had an idea of going there with me, for she doesn't know it at all. She was so keen about it that anyone might have thought we were going to start the very next day; but she has never said a word about it since.

.

December 11.

Miss Zimmern is all right again, and asked me to tea this afternoon. The Princess took me down in the automobile, and fetched me away again.

Miss Zimmern was talking again about the Princess's "wonderful plan," and wondering what it could be. I told her what I knew about it, and said I thought the "plan" consisted in what she had written

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

to the Court. But Miss Zimmern doesn't believe that that has anything to do with it. . . .

Well, one can't escape from excitements here! Now it's this terrible waiting for the answer from Dresden, which may come any day. I can't understand how the Court can treat this affair in such dilatory fashion. I was only engaged for four weeks, and those four weeks are gone by. Surely, it would be only courteous to communicate with me punctually, to say whether I was to stay on after my time was up, and when I was to expect my definite dismissal. As it is, I am simply in the clouds. I have written in this sense to the Chancery Office (*Kämmereiamt*), and said that, in default of instructions, I intended to leave in time to spend Christmas in Germany.* And upon this I am

*As a matter of fact, they *had* written. The letter was dispatched on December 1, and contained fifty marks salary for the month, with the information that no further communication about the departure of the little princess had been received, and

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

resolved, and have already settled it with the Princess.

I leave here on Wednesday the 19th, in the evening, reach Milan next morning, and then go by Como and the Saint Gothard Tunnel to Zürich or Lucerne; stay there a night, and go on next day. . . . There is no further talk of the Countess Fugger coming with me; she only arrives here in the afternoon of the 19th, so as to spend Christmas with the Princess.

.

December 12.

Last night we had burglars, and the whole house is in a state of desperate excitement. I awoke very early, and saw the Princess, already in her fencing-dress, with a cloak flung over it, talking eagerly adding that I might expect immediate instructions. I did not receive the letter, because the Office had sent it to an old address, and, curiously enough, had used English for the superscription! In uneducated Italy it is no wonder that the Post Office puzzled over the address for months, so that I only got the letter in Dresden at the end of March, 1907.

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

under my window with Haubold and some other servants.

I quickly learnt that the thieves had been in the garage and the chapel, and had been very successful in the former, where they had got hold of four pneumatic tyres and a woollen rug. Some valuable tools are also missing from the tool-chest. Luckily, Monica's marten-rug, which had been left in the closed coupé, escaped them.

The Princess says the loss is about 1,200 *lire*; and, as if that was not enough they did some damage in the chapel too. A heavy sandstone pillar, which formed the frame of the door, has been broken, and is lying on the ground; and the interior of the chapel is in an indescribable state of disorder. The rascals even ravaged the altar, but found nothing worth taking either there or anywhere else. Some valueless candlesticks they entirely ignored.

Of course the police were instantly in-

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

formed of the burglary, and a few hours later some sergeants appeared to investigate the damage and take informations. And so the matter rests for the present. There is not a trace of the miscreants, nor does there appear to be any chance of catching them.

In spite of the loss she has suffered, the Princess is as cheerful as ever, and only pities the chauffeur for the fright and worry he must have had! She seems—and it's quite incomprehensible to me—to be quite sure of getting back her precious pneumatic tyres. She is naive enough to believe that the thieves will never be able to sell them in Florence without betraying themselves. The chauffeur remarks, "Then they'll sell them in Bologna!"

Workmen have already arrived to repair the damage in the chapel. The thieves had a try at the house-door, too; and one consequence is that, by my special request, the doors of my room have been

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

seen to, and one of the missing bolts replaced. Although I'm not timid by nature, I cannot help feeling uncomfortable at the thought that I am the only living soul who sleeps upon the ground-floor. In spite of the strongly barred windows, I don't feel safe in the huge room; and I am particularly uneasy about those silly doors in the tapestry, which any moderately strong man could easily break open.

A further consequence of the burglary is that the Princess has bought herself a revolver, and is now practising diligently under the superintendence of the chauffeur.

Her extraordinary behaviour gives *me* the extraordinary idea that the burglary is not quite genuine! But I rack my brains in vain to discover her motive. She can't possibly want to frighten me away, for she knows perfectly well that I am going in any case. All the same, I can't get rid of the idea that there's some

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

connection between her "wonderful idea" and this wonderful burglary!

.

December 13.

Whether the burglary was genuine or not (and I'm by no means sure yet), it has, at all events, made an impression upon the inhabitants of Montauto. Although they don't admit it to one another, they have all grown timid and very much more cautious. Some of them insist that they have seen mysterious-looking men slinking along by the walls in the dark. Even the chauffeur, who is otherwise a sensible fellow, won't stir a step now without a revolver, and maintains that he has often noticed a suspicious-looking individual following the automobile in the evenings.

Altogether, such a state of "nerves" has been created that we are all inclined to make mountains out of molehills. I

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

myself was desperately frightened to-day. I was sitting before the fire reading, when I heard a rustling noise in a dark corner of the room. However, I took heart of grace, and held a candle behind the toilet-table to the corner whence the rustling came, and found—a mouse-hole, and a little mouse hurrying into it. That was the terrible explanation! Now I understand Bucki's preference for my room. . . . The Princess behaves as if nothing whatever had happened, but diligently practises her revolver-shooting all the same—in rivalry with the chauffeur now'

.

December 14.

Even though my decision is made, and the very day of my departure settled, I still await with keen suspense the letter from Dresden. This uncertainty is frightful. . . . The ghost stories of the Villa Montauto go gaily on. Rosina declares

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

she saw a man without a head wandering about the house one night! Even Haushold believes her, and the other Italians "go about with trembling knees," they say.

The Princess went to Miss Zimmern's to-day, and when she came back, professed a deep interest in the blood-and-thunder stories of the domestics. She appears to like having her nerves upset.

.

December 15.

Again a magnificent sunny morning, so the Princess arranged to meet Monica and me on the Piazza Trinita after our morning walk. She wants to help me in choosing some of the delicate, costly leather-work for which Florence is famous; and also to buy some sweetmeats for my daughters on her own account, which I am to present them with in her name. She got them two boxes of her favourite *Scorza*—a kind

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

of chocolate with burnt almonds. We met Miss Zimmern while we were shopping, and drove back to Montauto about half-past one. We were in the highest good humour, enjoying the rare beauty of the day—and had forgotten all about ghosts and burglars.

In her gay mood the Princess, when we returned, inscribed a visiting-card for each of my daughters, to go with the chocolates. I had told her that one of them had a very good appetite. Remembering this, she asked, "Which is the one with the appetite?" and wrote on the card for that one this romantic superscription: "Follow a good example, and eat up all your sweets at once!" By the "good example" she meant herself!

Even Moni knows that Frau Kremer is soon going home. Out driving to-day, she would not sit beside her mamma, but beside me, and nestled up so close and warm and was so sweet and dear, that I

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

shall always look back to the moment with pleasant emotion. She was looking particularly lovely, too—like a real little Princess—in her white silk cloak, her picturesque white felt hat, her costly ermine muff, and the long white stockings and white rough-leather boots on her dainty legs. Many an admiring glance was cast at the exquisite little creature, as she nestled in my arms. But ah!—the poor baby! That dirty, ragged street-child there, holding to her mother's hand, and envying Moni, was happier than she—the street-child who would joyfully welcome her father later on, as he returned for the mid-day rest! . . . These troubled thoughts fell like a shadow over our good hour, and did not leave me for the rest of the day.

.

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

December 16.

My last Sunday at Montauto. To-day the long-expected communication from Dresden came at last—a thick, closely-written letter for me, and a similar one for the Princess. We each sought the solitude of our chambers, to read the weighty documents with due solemnity. The reason of the thickness of my packet was that the contract referring to my permanent engagement was enclosed. It is just as I foresaw—His Majesty the King has granted the Countess Montignoso's request to keep the little Princess with her until April 1, and I myself, by her express desire, am to stay in Florence till then. The accompanying contract contained the conditions for my further engagement. They are not what I desired, but I might perhaps have reconsidered them.

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

Only somehow I have the feeling that the letter is a kind of warning to me to be cautious. They tell me that no decision has been made about the further future of the little Princess, but that it is probable that after her arrival in Dresden she will, sooner or later, be brought up with the other Royal children. And I must also reckon with the fact that in Spring there will probably be a further postponement of her departure. . . . Even though these remarks only represent an unofficial opinion, they prophesy the extremely probable. . . . On the whole, the letter confirms me in my resolution only to accept the position of governess to the little Princess if she goes at once to Germany; and I have decided to write in this sense.

I was still sitting by the fire with the papers in my hand, when the Princess came in with *her* letter. She waved it at me from the doorway, exclaiming in joyful excitement that her chief demand had

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

been acceded to—she was to keep Moni till the spring. I then read the typewritten letter, which told her of His Majesty's decision, and which went on to declare that all further suggestions were to be considered answered by the Florence compact of 1905. For this reason the reception of the Countess Fugger as the confidential agent of the Countess Montignoso was held to be superfluous, and was refused.

But all that seems to be a matter of perfect indifference to the Princess at this moment, for she is in such glee at her great success in being allowed to keep the child. She then asked me about the contents of my letter, and her first word was: "You mustn't accept those conditions. They're quite too bad."

I had to suppress a smile at the remembrance of her sacred promises to me a little time ago, to make such brilliant arrangements for me at Court! If she had

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

really meant what she said, I dare say it would be easy enough for her to keep her word now. But I made no remark whatever about it, for by this time I know well enough what to think of the Princess's assurances, and am, moreover, aware that my further stay in Florence has ceased to be of any service to her. She must have guessed my thoughts, for she began again to assure me "how much she liked me, how Moni loved me, and how she wouldn't entrust her child to anyone but me—but I had been quite right, and that was only feasible in Germany, or, rather, in Dresden. . . ." As she had just seen it written down in black and white in my letter from the Court that after Monica went to Dresden she was to be brought up with the rest of the Royal children (which would, of course, make my presence superfluous), she was quite safe in harping on *that* string. At any rate, I told her again that I intended to leave on December 19,

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

and that shortly before my departure I should write to Dresden and say so.

She then devoted herself to arranging my best way of going, and promised me that she would see about my ticket at Cook's next morning.

Sunday afternoon went by, as usual, quite quietly. At five o'clock I had tea with Monica, and then the Princess, who had returned from a short visit in the town, said that she would like to write some more post-cards with me. Awaiting her summons, I sat with Monica, who was eagerly painting, and helped her with it. Haubold was with us, busy with some needlework, but disappeared from time to time into the next room.

I waited on, expecting a summons, but to-day the Princess seemed able to get on by herself. The telephone sounded incessantly; in Italy it seems never to cease, Sundays and week-days, day and night. And Hedwig was forever disappearing

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

into the next room. The atmosphere was pervaded with restlessness to such an extent that even I was only able to follow Moni's painting with very divided attention. I noticed that Haubold wandered about the room in ever-increasing excitement, inspecting the windows and doors, and sighing deeply from time to time.

I was just going to ask her for an explanation of her remarkable behaviour when she surprised me with the still more remarkable question, "Whether I could sleep with a light in my room?"

I inquired the reason of this totally irrelevant curiosity, and she said that they were afraid of burglars again, and that by the Princess's orders they were taking every possible precaution, and were to keep lamps burning all night.

The Princess had been advised by her friends, and even by the police, to put her jewellery and silver in some safe place, for a whole crew of thieves and burglars had

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

an eye upon them. The police had been informed that the gang was lurking in the vicinity of Montauto, and that there was no doubt whatever that they had designs upon our house.

A truly wonderful tale! If the police know the gang which is meditating an attack upon Villa Montauto, why do they not arrest them? or at any rate arrange a surprise? or at least keep a strict watch on the villa? However, I went with Moni to her mother, who confirmed all Haubold's statements, rushed to the telephone every minute, sometimes to answer it, sometimes to send messages herself; but, all the same, appeared to me to be perfectly easy in her mind. She met all my objections with general remarks, such as that it was very disagreeable for a lonely woman in Italy to live so far away from the town, especially when she had so little confidence in her Italian servants that she felt sure they would betray their mistress for two-

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

pence. The only thing to do in such circumstances was to protect oneself. . . . One wonders why, in that case, the Princess selected Montauto, which is by far the most remote and lonely of the villas on Bellosguardo!

All this time the telephone never ceased ringing. In Italian, English, and French, the Princess says she is implored by her friends to be cautious, and is advised to have some *carabinieri* posted round the house that night. To judge by the amount of ringing-up, half Florence must be aware that Villa Montauto is to be "burgled" to-night! Even Miss Zimmern has telephoned repeatedly, saying she has heard—from whom the Princess does not say—that a burglary is in preparation! Her Imperial Highness declares that she will do without the police, and much prefers to look after herself, for it often happens that, instead of being a protection, they are actually in league with the thieves. . . .

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

I must confess that all these disclosures only confirm my secret belief; I am possessed anew by the idea of the Princess's "wonderfully clever plan," though I can't quite discover the connection. Perhaps she wants to disgust me so utterly with Montauto at this last moment that I shall never again be able to contemplate the idea of going there to kidnap a Princess Pia Monica!

Chiefly to satisfy Miss Zimmern, who again rang her up—evidently the Princess has succeeded in thoroughly alarming *her*—it was decided to put the jewels at least in some safe place. They are to be taken this evening to Miss Zimmern, and tomorrow deposited at her bank. In the meantime all the windows and doors were carefully bolted by the servants. The immense mattress on the Princess's bed was lifted, and the big chest of silver hidden underneath it.

We dined later than usual, but Moni

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

was put to bed at her customary hour. I felt rather reluctant to go down to my isolated quarters, and stayed up in the nursery as long as I could. About half-past nine, the Princess drove into town in the automobile to take her jewels to Miss Zimmern. As she passed through the nursery, she showed me her big silk bag; she had hidden the jewels in it, and then fastened it round her waist under her white tea-gown. Loaded revolver in hand, she got into the car, and took her treasures away—to safety!

Is there method in her madness? I stayed some time upstairs; Haubold also was unwilling to go to bed, and said she intended to sit up all night with her lamp burning. But in the end my fatigue vanquished my fears, and so I went downstairs, and when I had made sure that my windows and doors were all right, I betook myself to bed. I had just put out the lamp when I heard the Princess re-

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

turning. For some time afterwards I heard her moving about in her room, then all was still, and I slept soundly and peacefully till morning.

CHAPTER XV

[*December 17.*

WHEN I opened the shutters, the glorious morning sunshine streamed into the room and almost blinded me. It was a lovely day, with a cloudless blue sky. The bright beams seemed to chase away all the terrors of the night. Montauto lay so peacefully basking in the warmth and light that it was impossible to believe in lurking thieves and robbers. I couldn't help smiling at the remembrance of my fears. Have we all got hysteria? It seems to me merely some monstrous piece of absurdity, but I am not yet sure of my ground. . . . Well, to-day is the last that I can enjoy with Moni out of doors. To-morrow I shall have to begin my packing, and the day after—it's "home, sweet home!"

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

Of course I must write my letter to the Court first. Is *that* what makes the Princess suspect me—as I think she does—of playing fast and loose with her? I suppose there's some excuse for her, for I explained quite clearly weeks ago that nothing would make me stay in Montauto when my time was up. Does she regard that as a mere feint on my part? Perhaps she thinks that I only said it to gain time, by such a pretence, to study her more closely? Certainly the fact that I haven't yet written to the Court to say "I am going," when the day of my departure has been long decided on, may well seem to her inexplicable. . . . But can it possibly be *only* because she wants to drive me away that she has got up these burglary and ghost-stories? I am not quite clear about that. But I should think that after she has bought me my ticket at Cook's to-day, and so may really feel quite certain that I mean to go, she

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

will scarcely go in for another of these ridiculous exhibitions! . . . During the afternoon she gave me my little ticket-book and a sort of itinerary of my journey, which she had compiled from the guide-book. According to this, I leave Florence the day after to-morrow, at 5.50 a.m., by which early start I reach Lucerne or Basle the same evening, and stay there the night. The Princess strongly advises this way of going, and promises to drive me to the station herself for the early train.

But amazing to relate—with the twilight recommenced the ghost-stories! It's as if night-fall drove all the dwellers in Mont-auto crazy. Cook Rosina brought forth grisly tales of nightly inroads upon the remote villa where her former master and mistress lived, when it actually came to pitched battles between the burglars and the police, in which five of the latter were fatally injured. And the maids, Severina and Gioconda, now declare that

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

the night before, they heard all sorts of suspicious sounds—a long, long conversation carried on beneath their window. . .

(I thought of my little mouse!) They are already trembling at the thought of the night. It is remarkable how this terror, which entirely disappears by daylight, seems to stalk from every corner as soon as darkness falls. Haubold especially—who is highly hysterical at any time—now puts no limit to her wild and fantastic imaginings. The story of the headless man is a mere trifle to the other things she believes. To-day she announced, pale with excitement, that she is sure the whole villa is undermined. “And this could not be the ordinary type of thief, who is after wine and jewellery, silver, gold, and such-like things.” The Princess, she said, was of the same opinion, but neither would explain their enigmatic hints. Later on, I extracted from Haubold the fact that this was “something quite out of the common”

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

in the way of a gang of thieves. She said "there was to be a night attack on Montauto by a hired gang, who were to carry off the Princess and have her put in a madhouse, while Monica would either be killed or shut up in a convent. That was the real truth, and the Princess knew it as well as she did."

"But who in Heaven's name is the abettor of all these horrors?" I asked.

To that the frantically-excited woman gave no answer but an eloquent look and a shrug of the shoulders. I easily divined her meaning, but it made the notion no less incomprehensible to me. "*The abettor was in the same place that the hired gang was sent from. . . .*"

About six o'clock, the chauffeur appeared on foot. He took the automobile to the garage to-day by the Princess's orders. There were some repairs necessary, and then the machine is to be cleaned, so it will be away some days; and as the

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

chauffeur has nothing to do here in the interval, he proposed to escape the ghost-stories by going to a variety theatre to-night with a colleague. He wanted to ask the Princess to permit him to spend the night in the town with friends, for he was afraid to return all that long way alone: it's at least half-an-hour through dark, densely-wooded paths. The Princess was informed by telephone, and gave permission forthwith. And so she is depriving us of the one man we have to protect us at Montauto!

She came home rather late, was in the best of spirits at dinner-time, and afterwards retired to her own rooms, not without giving me many messages from Miss Zimmern, "who would expect me next day." She asked if I had written to Dresden yet; but all the fuss and excitement of those ridiculous ghost-stories had prevented me again. However, I'll write early to-morrow, before I go to Miss Zimmern.

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

December 18.

I had fallen asleep, when I was awakened by a pistol-shot, which sounded quite close at hand. I started up, electrified. Another shot! How loud it sounded in the silent night. "Now I am punished for my scepticism; the thieves are really real!" I thought. Though I didn't think of the headless man and the undermined villa, I *did* remember Rosina's talk about the pitched battle. *We were attacked!* Then I heard steps overhead, then the telephone-bell, and a distant sound of voices.

My heart stopped beating for a moment, then pounded wildly on. Lying motionless with terror, I strained my ears for every movement overhead. Ah!—it ran through my every nerve—another shot, and yet another and another, in the deathly stillness of the night. . . .

For a moment I had the impression

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

that the shots came from the Princess's room. What was the meaning of it all? My brain was whirling; it is no trifle to be awakened by five pistol-shots in the dead of night. I couldn't move a limb, and I don't know how long I lay there. Then I heard steps and voices outside, and soon afterwards they approached—men's footsteps, echoing on the flags which surround the house—men's footsteps and men's voices. . . . They came close to my window. "It must be the thieves," thought I. "The wretches have finished their murderous work upstairs, and are now coming down to ransack the ground-floor."

I don't want to exaggerate, but I must say I was in mortal terror, perhaps not so much of any harm they might be going to do me, as because I really thought my heart would break through my body, so fast was it beating. My brow was cold and wet with fright, and I could hear noth-

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

ing but that heart beating, beating . . . and in the end a kind of stupor came over me. The footsteps were coming closer, closer. I heard doors opening and shutting; it was they, it was they! They were at my very door. . . . Already they had passed through the ante-room—the double doors—now came knocking, knocking . . . louder, louder . . . Then suddenly a familiar voice calling me by name—

“Do open your door, Frau Kremer—it’s all over—the thieves are gone!” It was the Princess! I came out of my swoon of terror. Again and again she knocked, and begged me to open the door, she was so anxious and distressed about me! She wanted to set my mind at rest—the wretches were gone, the police were here. I needn’t be afraid of lighting the lamp and opening the door now!

At least half-a-dozen matches were broken by my quivering hands before one was lit, but at last the lamp was alight,

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

and I opened the door. I was shaking all over with cold and agitation—I could hardly stand upright. Very quickly I got back into my warm bed. The door opened and let in a group of three female figures, the Princess in front in her white night-gown, with her revolver in her hand. Haubold followed, ghastly pale in *her* white night-gown. Her hair was in curl-papers, and formed a grotesque halo round her sallow, haggard face, with its deep lines from nose to mouth. Last of all came Rosina, clad only in her chemise and under-petticoat, and holding a flaring smoking oil-lamp, with no shade, high in the air, so that it lit up the scene as if with torch-light. Truly a most sensational situation, as they all approached my bed and the Princess—frequently interrupted by Haubold—began her tale of woe.

She had been asleep, and was awakened about one o'clock by Haubold, crying that she must get up: there were robbers in

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

the house. Haubold had been awake since twelve, and had heard unearthly subterranean noises going on for an hour at least. (Lying in bed, on the first storey, she had heard subterranean noises!) Instantly the Princess had rung up the police, and had been "put on" to Dr. Kreyl also, and begged him to hurry to the police-station and see that help was sent at once. Then she had listened for the sounds, but could not hear anything from her room. Then Haubold had said, "you'll hear them plainly enough from *my* bed." So she had lain down in Haubold's bed, and *had* heard, quite distinctly, the tapping and forcing of the burglars—and yet Haubold's bed is a degree further than her own from the indicated place!

When she had satisfied her ears she rushed at once to the window and fired two shots into the darkness outside. She then heard the robbers "popping round a corner"; but it seemed so long before

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

the police came that she fired three more shots from her window. In the meantime, all the Italian servants had awakened and had been ridiculously frightened—"regular cowards." At last the police arrived, but none of the Italians had had the pluck to go and open the gate, although she had ordered them to do so with her revolver in her hand! Finally they all went together: Severina, Rosina, Gioconda, Haubold, and herself—still with the freshly-loaded revolver—and opened the garden-gate. There stood the *carabinieri*, five in number; they at once patrolled every part of the grounds and the stone passage round the house (those were the footsteps I had heard), but they had found nothing!

While the Princess, desperately excited and in a great hurry, told me this story, stopping every now and then to pity "her poor dear little Kremer, who must have been half-dead with fright, cut off from

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

everybody," we heard a man's voice in the house. It was Dr. Kreyt, who had come up all the long, lonely way at dead of night, and without any police protection whatever. . . .

By this time it was two o'clock. With many assurances that I could now go to sleep again—"there was nothing more to be afraid of"—my nocturnal visitors left me. I kept my lamp lighted, and in the reaction from all the excitement, I fell into a deep, dreamless sleep, from which I was again aroused at eight o'clock by the Princess herself. I dressed in a great hurry. The Princess, in fencing-costume, and in the best of humours, with Moni by her side, soon appeared at my door. With her was Signor Giollini, who, quite oblivious of the intrusion, followed her into my bedroom! She was telling him of the night's adventures, with many digressions and the most violent gesticulation. The whole thing seems to afford her a heathen-

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

ish satisfaction, and she was soon hopping and dancing about my room in her fantastic dress, *chasséeing* in high good-humour from one corner of the room on to the bed, and then “polking” from one side to the other, while Monica tried to imitate her in her pretty childish fashion. But Signor Giollini stood still in the doorway with his hands folded upon his stomach, so that the point of the rapier was on the ground, wagging his body about, and turning up his watery eyes in frantic admiration of the enchanting little Princess and her “*bellissima* Mamma.”

After the terrors of the night, I was not yet capable of emulating their merriment, and could only envy the Princess that elastic nature of hers, for she seemed to have entirely forgotten all the agitation and excitement of a few hours ago. I felt simply shattered, while she was prancing gaily about my room, followed by sweet childish laughter, and visibly delighted

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

by the adulation of the absurd old fencing-master.

When I was ready dressed I investigated the whole place, and particularly that spot where the robbers were supposed to have begun operations. The Princess said they had tried to force open some of the shutters, and had damaged them. I could find no sign of damage, nor even any footprints in the whole region!

When we were at our coffee, I asked Moni what she had thought was happening last night. She appeared to have no proper appreciation of the tragedy, for all she had noticed was something monstrously funny.

"When Moni woke up, Mamma was lying in bed with Hede!"

And over that she laughed heartily, while the Princess asseverated once more that the best place to hear the robbers from had—really, *really*—been Haubold's bed.

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

Well, what does it matter? I shall never believe in the tale of last night's burglary. The only question is whether it was an exhibition of hysteria on the part of Haubold, or of the Princess, or of both; or whether it really is a part of the famous "clever plan," and therefore aimed directly at me. I am not going to bother my head about it any more, but still less do I intend to be any further frightened and made a fool of by invented ghost-stories and tasteless practical jokes, however romantically devised. And so I said to the Princess directly after breakfast that I hoped she would not be annoyed if I altered my original plans, and decided to start this evening.

She seemed very much surprised, and begged me urgently to stay until to-morrow—this was so very sudden! I said that in that case I would, at any rate, crave permission to be allowed to spend the night at a hotel, for I could not contemplate

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

the idea of passing another in my present bedroom.

In the end the Princess said she was prepared to get two detectives whom she knows to spend the night at the villa. On this condition, I agreed to remain; and with that I sat down and—what I ought to have done before—wrote to the Court.

I regretted, I said, that I found myself unable to sign the proposed contract, and intimated that I did not think it possible to carry out successfully any scheme for Princess Pia Monica's education—in *Montarto*. [I permitted myself further to point out that I had been commissioned for only four weeks' service in Italy, and that I had had no intention of undertaking any further duties in that country; but I *was* prepared, I continued, to undertake the education of the Princess in Germany later on.

Then I packed my things. I said good-bye by telephone to Miss Zimmern. I

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

gave the Princess my Dresden letter to read. She was pleased with its contents, sealed it with her own hand, her own silver-grey sealing-wax, and the "L" with the crown over it, and finally took it to the post herself.

The die is cast. I shall not regret the parting from anyone in Montauto, except Moni. Shall I ever see the dear little creature again? Shall I, from next Spring, be able to take up her education, difficult as it is, again? The child does not yet understand what parting means. She promises to write to me, to come and see me—talks on and on in her sweet childish gaiety, and even tries to console me for saying good-bye. . . . Late in the evening I went to sit by her little bed, and only tore myself away when she was falling off to sleep.

.

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

December 19.

Just as I got into bed, I was aroused by a loud knocking at my door. It was only good Rosina, who told me, in her mixture of Italian and French, that I might go to sleep—the two detectives had just come. . . . My alarm went off punctually at four. Before five I was ready to start, and went upstairs for my coffee. As I passed through the little morning-room, a man rose from the sofa in the half-darkness, and greeted me with a courteous "*Buon giorno, signora!*" One of the two detectives! The other was still lying down in the corridor on a couple of chairs, which he had arranged comfortably before the blazing fire.

The Princess was ready too. With her charming "homeliness" she poured out my coffee herself. Then we got into the carriage, which was ordered for five o'clock. The Princess sat beside me in the front

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

seat, and opposite was the lady's maid with the hand-luggage. Off we went in the pitch-dark morning. . . . So I left Villa Montauto. For a little while, the romantic shadowy outline of the tall guard-tower hung over us. The laurel-bushes at the side whispered farewell Songs without Words. And beside me sat the Countess Montignoso, Louise, Princess of Tuscany, and as such Her Imperial Highness, with a loaded revolver in her hand; and she was giving me her personal armed escort to the railway-station! At the Porta Romana, Ugo got up on the box. He is the commissionaire of an Agency which looks after one's luggage and gets one's seat for one at the Terminus. It was still quite dark when we got there. We had a little time to spare before the train started, so the Princess took my arm and walked up and down the platform with me. We talked of the near future and of Dresden.

"Well," said she, "you must be con-

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

vinced by this time how unsafe things are in this country, and how dangerous it is for Moni and me that I should have to live here in exile. Don't forget to say in Dresden how much better it would be if they would assign us a castle in Germany. It need not be in Saxony exactly, but, as I have already suggested, Sybillenort. Nothing could happen *there*, like what we've gone through these last few days."

We talked of various things, and I advised her not to stay any longer at Mont-auto now that it was so hideously unsafe. She promised me that she would look round for another house this very day.

When we said good-bye, she embraced me warmly and kissed me twice on each cheek; and when I thanked her for her hospitality and all her kindness, she answered:

"If you want to make up to me for it, take the opportunity of occasionally saying a good word for me in Germany;

STRUGGLE FOR A ROYAL CHILD

and as for Moni—if we gain time, we gain everything. And then,” she repeated, “don’t on *any* account forget to say at the Court how unsafe it is in Florence, and how much better it would be if we could all live in Germany, instead of here in this constant danger.”

And she said that with the most convincing gravity!

Shortly afterwards the bell rang. The Princess got on to the footboard, and was her most enchanting self for these last few moments. Then the train whistled. She waved her handkerchief to me once more—and so ended this episode in the struggle for Anna Monica Pia, Duchess of Saxony.

THE END

By VICTORIA CROSS

LIFE'S SHOP WINDOW \$1.50

"In its greatness it tears the garments of conventionality from woman and presents her before the world as she must appear to the divine eye. One of the greatest books of the period."

Cleveland Town Topics

ANNA LOMBARD \$1.50

"A bold, brilliant, defiant presentation of a phase of the relations of the sexes which I do not remember having seen treated with the same freedom, delicacy and audacity. It is difficult to praise the book too highly."

Review of Reviews

SIX WOMEN \$1.50

"All the glow and passion of the Orient compressed into one book; a half-dozen of the most vivid love stories that ever lit up the dusk of a tired civilization."

Town Topics, N. Y.

**SIX CHAPTERS OF A MAN'S LIFE
\$1.50**

THE WOMAN WHO DIDN'T \$1.25

At all booksellers or sent postpaid by the publisher on receipt of price.

MITCHELL KENNERLEY, Publisher, New York

By **EDGAR SALTUS**

"The artistic stature of Edgar Saltus is
greater than sixty times six best sellers."

San Francisco Argonaut

THE LORDS OF THE GHOST- LAND A HISTORY OF THE IDEAL \$1.25 net

"The book is superbly wise, divinely witty and yet
touchingly pathetic because it deals with the dreams
that filled the lives of millions."

Elbert Hubbard in The Philistine

HISTORIA AMORIS \$1.50 net A HISTORY OF LOVE, ANCIENT AND MODERN

"One of the most brilliant books I have ever read."

Douglas Sladen in the London Queen

THE POMPS OF SATAN \$1.50 net

"There is not a dull paragraph in the book."

Boston Evening Transcript

IMPERIAL PURPLE \$1.00 net

"The splendid tragedy of Rome, dazzlingly de-
picted."

The Times

MARY MAGDALEN \$1.00 net

"A story of great strength and almost photographic
intensity."

Boston Transcript

At all booksellers or sent postpaid by the publisher on receipt of price.

MITCHELL KENNERLEY, Publisher, New York

2835 MAYFAIR

BY

FRANK RICHARDSON

"the wittiest man in London"



A daring innovation worked out in a way that appeals to the lovers of sensational fiction. A wild extravaganza, witty and smart.—*Brooklyn Eagle*

Audacity and a pretty wit are the most striking features of the art of Frank Richardson. He shows himself to be a young man with more pure unadulterated "cheek" than any one we can recall. The most entertaining reading we have come across in the output of Fall books. More than this, the reader who is at all interested in style will be amused and interested in the delightful wit of this audacious writer.—*New York Press*

Startlingly original, Mr. Richardson's people are distinctly individualized. There is much delightful fun-making. As pleasant and entertaining a book as has appeared for some time.—*Cleveland Plain Dealer*

Clever in an up-to-date way.—*Hartford Times*

A source of exciting bewilderment to the reader. We are diverted by the twistings and turnings of his story and follow it appreciatively to the end.—*N. Y. Tribune*

A decidedly unconventional and original novel.

—*Boston Transcript*

MITCHELL KENNERLEY, Publisher, New York

By SEWELL FORD

Shorty McCabe

\$1.50

Illustrated by F. Vaux Wilson

"Shorty McCabe is a finely drawn character, has a rare insight into human nature, and has a flow of witty slang that makes the reader almost gasp for breath. A sure cure for the blues."

The Springfield Republican

"Shorty McCabe is a philosopher as well as a wit. One of the drollest, most winsome characters in recent humorous fiction."

The Philadelphia Press

"The most joyous personage we have met with in fiction in a good many days."

The New York Press

"There is not a careless line in the book; every one carries a smile and pleases with the apt turn of thought into slang phrases. In every chapter is a hearty laugh and nearly everyone catches the heart as well."

Denver Republican

"A true American type and of an inextinguishable manliness."

Washington Star

At all booksellers or sent postpaid by the publisher on receipt of price.

MITCHELL KENNERLEY, Publisher, New York

THE LITTLE CLASSICS

Exquisitely printed on antique wove paper, gilt top, decorated red cloth, blue wrappers, each forty cents net.

Five Volumes in Box, \$2.00 Net

A SHROPSHIRE LAD *By* A. E. HOUSMAN *Authorized Edition*

SISTER BENVENUTA AND THE CHRIST CHILD *An Eighteenth Century Legend* *By* VERNON LEE

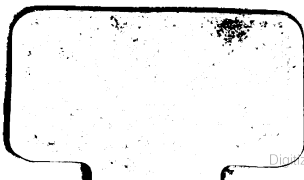
THE SONG OF SONGS *Which is SOLOMON'S*

THE EARLY POEMS OF DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

RUBAIYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM
Translated by EDWARD FITZGERALD



**NEW YORK
MITCHELL KENNERLEY**



HELMKAP & WARFIELD
BOOKSELLERS.
CHAMBERS ST. N.Y.

